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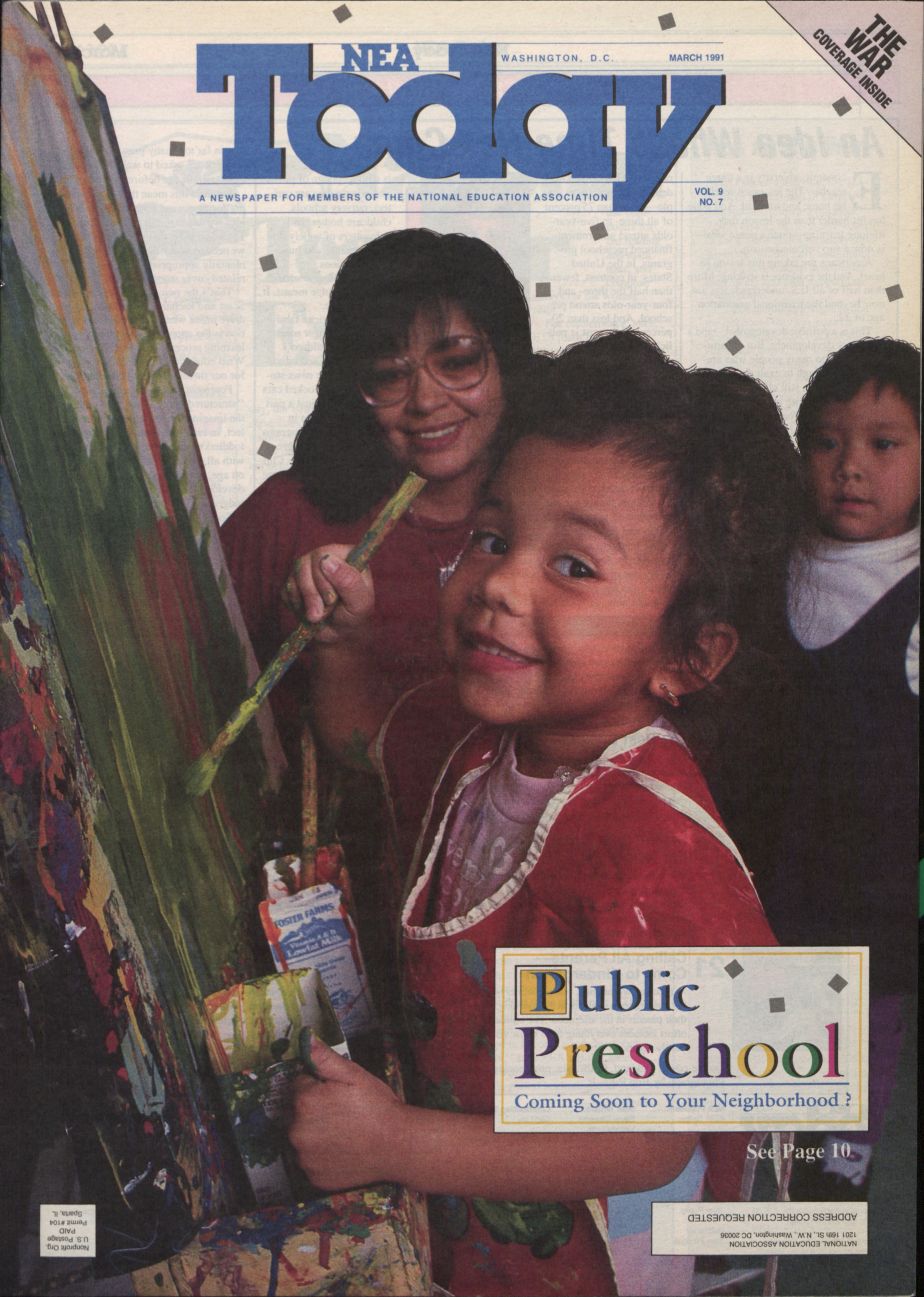
THE WAR
COVERAGE INSIDE



Public Preschool

Coming Soon to Your Neighborhood?

See Page 10

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PRESIDENT'S VIEWPOINT

An Idea Whose Time Has Come

NEA President
Keith Geiger

Economic adversity is a tough teacher. The lessons it teaches hit home and hit hard. And none has hit harder than the lesson that lifelong learning—once a noble ideal—is now a survival mechanism.

Americans are taking this lesson to heart. And the evidence is striking: More than half of all U.S. undergraduates are now beyond the traditional graduation age of 22.

This is a positive development—and a necessary development. But unfortunately, far too many people who are farsighted enough to exalt the ideal of lifelong learning still cling to the startling notion that life begins at age five.

This Alice-in-Wonderland perspective has got to end. And the sooner the better.

At present, America excludes the very young from formal education, apparently on the assumption that at age five, all children suddenly undergo a magical change that makes them ready for school.

Does research confirm this assumption? No. Do studies of emotional and intellectual development tell us all children achieve readiness for the first formal steps toward lifelong learning at precisely the same time? Absolutely not.

That's why in most industrialized nations—Germany, Sweden, and France, for example—more than 75 percent of all three- to five-year-olds attend government-financed preschool programs. In the United States, in contrast, fewer than half the three- and four-year-olds attend preschool. And less than 20 percent of the cost is publicly financed.

Might not our reluctance to open our public schools to children younger than age five be one reason our nation faces such a stern economic challenge from foreign competitors?

I think there's something to that analysis. And so does our NEA Board of Directors. That's why the Board has formally adopted the position that "public schools should become the primary providers of preschool education for three- and four-year-olds."

We intend to pursue this initiative vigorously. And I'm asking each and every one of you to get on board. The status quo has got to go.

Right now, early childhood education is a hodgepodge of public and private daycare centers, nursery schools, childcare homes, and babysitters of widely differing quality and huge cost variations.

All of us know what this hodgepodge means. It means failure.

Most American families can no longer meet their young children's needs for care and education alone: The news stories of young children left in locked cars and empty homes all day tell just a part of that story. A family's success in enrolling its children in quality programs rests on a combination of luck, aggressiveness, and—primarily—income. Children from poor families—precisely those most in need—are least likely to be enrolled in quality programs.

This tragedy makes a mockery of the ideal of lifelong learning.

This ideal does not, of course, imply that three- and four-year-olds are ready for academic instruction. Researchers at the National Association for the Education of Young Children frequently warn that in far too many preschool centers, children are asked to walk before they can crawl, to run before they can walk.

But does this mean that public schooling for three- and four-year-olds is an idea we ought to put to rest? Not at all. The conclusion that's warranted is that we need to assure these toddlers developmentally appropriate activities. (See related cover story, pages 10 and 11.)

That's the point psychologists Sandra Scarr and Richard A. Weinberg try to drive home when they argue that nutrition is the appropriate metaphor for the learning process. The critical question is, What educational nutrients are essential for our three- and four-year-olds?

Foremost among these essentials is "structured play"—play that enlivens the imagination and exercises the intellect. In brief, we should be doing with toddlers exactly what we should be doing with all students: basing instruction not on age, but on each student's stage of development. Our children should not be judged by their birthdates.

Social upheavals have created a demand for school-based early childhood care. Let's treat that demand as an opportunity to start transforming our schools into the true lifelong learning centers they ought to be. It's time to open the doors to toddlers.

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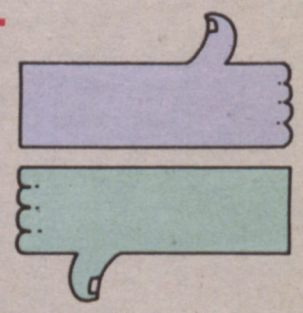
Sure, says a Missouri teacher, who argues teachers will make the best decisions. Not on my lunch hour, says a West Virginia teacher, maintaining that teachers don't have time; personnel officers do.



On the cover: Oakland, California, preschooler Antonietta Austin, with her teacher assistant Judy Cabral. Photograph by Bob Riha, Jr.

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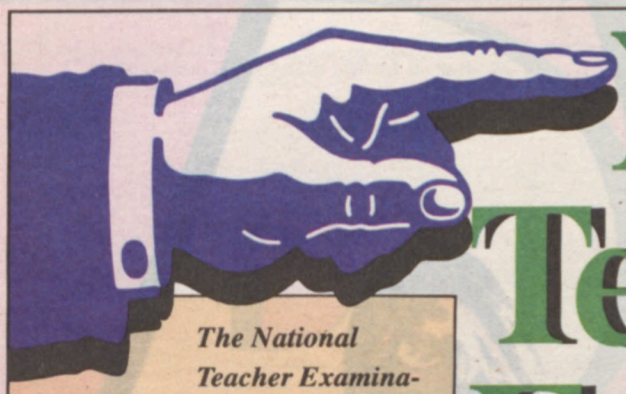
NATIONAL NEWS



National Teacher Exam Takes a New Twist

The National Teacher Examination is on its way out. Its replacement: a multi-faceted assessment process—whose creators say will help make better teachers, not sharper test-takers.

An educator's life begins in stages.

First, there's the decision to enter teaching. Next, there's the decision to specialize—in math or science, elementary or high school—and lengthy study of general pedagogy. Finally, there's classroom practice under the watchful eye of a supervising teacher.

How can a single paper-and-pencil test acknowledge these phases, be multiculturally sensitive, and assess the real-life classroom experiences of prospective teachers?

That's one of the major questions about the National Teacher Examination, a hurdle that prospective teachers have faced for the past 54 years—and still face today in 37 states.

Now the testmaker, the Educational Testing Service (ETS), is saying goodbye to the National Teacher Exam and hello to a new generation of teacher licensure testing.

Interactive videos, computer simulations of classroom situations, classroom observations, and portfolios are only a few of the innovative methods ETS plans to use when the new tests debut in the fall of 1992.

"What we've tried to do this time is create a comprehensive assessment and instructional program for teacher licensing that's tied to the important milestones of a prospective teacher's career path," says ETS President Gregory Anrig.

"Unlike the current written test given in several two-hour segments on a single day, our new test will evaluate teacher candidates at pivotal stages in their training," adds Anrig. "This will help us not only assess prospective teachers but help them strengthen their skills from the moment they make their decision to teach." That's good news to NEA, says Vice-President Bob Chase.

The new National Teacher Exam will use computers to test candidates' knowledge but classroom experience to assess teaching ability.

Chase serves on the Teacher Programs Council, an advisory group to the ETS.

"This is a positive step—it moves the assessment process away from paper and pencil to a set of procedures that more accurately assesses the candidate's abilities inside the classroom. Our goal is to make sure the candidate can teach, not just pass tests."

The new test comprises three phases.

Stage I will be a basic skills test. When students decide they're interested in teaching, they'll be tested on reading, writing, and mathematical skills. The tests will be done early in a student's career so additional instruction can be provided if necessary.

This first stage will include practice tests, diagnostic skills assessment, and instructional models. Candidates will use computers for the reading and math tests, and compose essays for the writing tests.

For convenience' sake, ETS plans to administer the tests by appointment, rather than on a single date.

Stage II will assess general teaching knowledge, subject matter knowledge, and in some cases, subject matter pedagogy. Stage II will include a Spanish exam for Spanish teachers and a mathematics exam for mathematics teachers, as well as a separate test of general pedagogical knowledge.

These multiple-choice and interactive computer tests will be scheduled after or near the end of an undergraduate program, when the teaching candidate has chosen to specialize in a particular subject area.

The tests will be modular, says ETS, so states can choose the units that best match their own regulations. States that want to assess a candidate's knowledge about how to teach a particular subject can add a section on that subject's pedagogy. States that don't want that kind of assessment can use a test devoted strictly to content.

The modular format, ETS says, will also help candidates test for particular state requirements. A Tennessee teaching candidate, for example, might also elect to take the modules required for licensure in California.

Stage III will take place after teaching candidates have had supervised classroom experience. This final assessment stage will include evaluations of actual classroom teaching, interviews with teaching candidates, and possibly teacher portfolios.

"The third stage of the new NTE is particularly important because it's an opportunity to see if the candidates are qualified to become good classroom teachers," says NEA's Bob Chase.

ETS will phase in the new test over a five-year period beginning next year.

—*Anita Merina*

LOOKING AHEAD

► March is Women's History Month.

► An NEA national conference, "Education Support Personnel: Professional Partners for Tomorrow's Schools," will be held April 12-14 in Chicago.

► World Children's Day is April 28. The theme: "Lend a Hand, Let's Build a Bright, Clean Land."

NEA on the War

At its February meeting, the 158-member NEA Board of Directors adopted the following position: "NEA honors the men and women of the United States presently serving in the Middle East, and supports the U.S. government in ensuring their safety and their expeditious return home.

"NEA members recognize that the impact of this war goes far beyond Middle East battlefields. Anxieties, anger, and apprehension over the war have invaded classrooms throughout America. NEA shall work to help create education environments that both address the fears that war engenders and foster reason, not rancor."

The statement continues by urging "a settlement of the crisis that will improve the prospects for long-term stability and peace in the region."

Budget Blues

President Bush's new budget proposal for fiscal year 1992 purports to increase education spending by $2.5 billion. NEA President Keith Geiger calls that "no increase at all. The reality is that education is taking a big cut."

According to a *Wall Street Journal* report, "The vaunted 9 percent increase is largely accounted for by inflation, a bookkeeping change involving federally insured student loans, and spending authorized in previous years."

"If we are serious about school readiness and achieving all of the nation's education goals," Geiger continues, "this is not the type of budget that will get us there."

Geiger said the proposal "doesn't even make a dent" in funding needs for Head Start, Chapter 1, and other critical programs. "NEA and its members are cognizant that we all have to do more," Geiger says, "but we can't do more with less."

National Test Talk

Will your students be required to take a national test, with results made available to prospective colleges and employers? If recent headlines are any indicator, it's looking more likely.

In the last month, several groups—including the National Alliance of Business, Educate America, Inc., and the National Center on Education and the Economy—have put forth their proposals.

NEA doesn't favor a one-shot, high-stakes test, but is looking closely at better ways to assess students' K-12 careers.

CONFLICT AT HOME

When War Comes Home

War brings many changes for both students and staff—perhaps not permanently, but certainly for the duration.

> ***"Will we feel the shake of the bombs over here, Mr. McCloud?"***

The war that broke out in the Persian Gulf on January 16 brought U.S. schools suddenly face to face with new realities—conditions that will last at least as long as the war does.

For many students war brings fear—fear for their own safety.

"The day after the bombing began, my students were afraid they would feel the impact of bombs all the way to Oklahoma," recalls Bill McCloud, a sixth grade teacher in Pryor, Oklahoma.

The student fear wasn't a product of poor geography skills. Rather: "These children have no experience with war; they are afraid of personal involvement."

For high school students, the possibility of personal involvement is much less remote. In earlier wars, high school students realize, young men very near their age were drafted.

"The day after war broke out, I was most surprised that my seniors were fearful," says social studies teacher Bob Haisman, at Hinsdale South High School, outside Chicago.

"And they didn't know what to make of being afraid." Haisman adds, "They thought they should be cheerleading."

Fear also weighs heavily on students in schools on or near military bases—like Fort Hood, Texas, or McGuire AFB, New Jersey. Or any of the U.S. bases in Western Europe, where almost every child has at least one parent in the Gulf.

"When all the parents serve in the same unit, you can't rule out the possibility of a tragedy—that they could all become casualties in the same action," says Susan Nornhold, special education teacher at a Department of Defense Dependent High School at Vilseck, Germany.

Schools serving military bases have worked out crisis intervention procedures.

"We determined whose task it would be to take a child home if the word should come that a parent has become a casualty," says Carol Bergevin, local Association president in North Hanover Township, which serves New Jersey's McGuire AFB.

The absence from school of staffers called to active service also serves as a reminder that school life is far from normal.

One called-up reservist is Damon Morris, an NEA member who works as a suspension aide in Nevada. "Damon kept the kids in line," says colleague Bonnie Martinez. "I've heard kids say they miss him and want him back."

At the beginning of the war, fear on campus was primarily fear of what could happen, with teachers serving as a reality check for students. That may change, with any shift in the direction of the war, to fear of what is happening. (See Student Health, page 23.)

> ***"Kids brought newspapers to class for the first time, and they could explain things about missiles that I didn't know."***

The Gulf War has also had what might be termed an intellectual impact on schools.

"Kids who never before carried newspapers now bring the *Washington Post* into class every day," says Maria Hoffmann, a special education teacher at Hayfield High School in Fairfax County, Virginia, near Washington, D.C. "It's the diagrams and maps they're looking at.

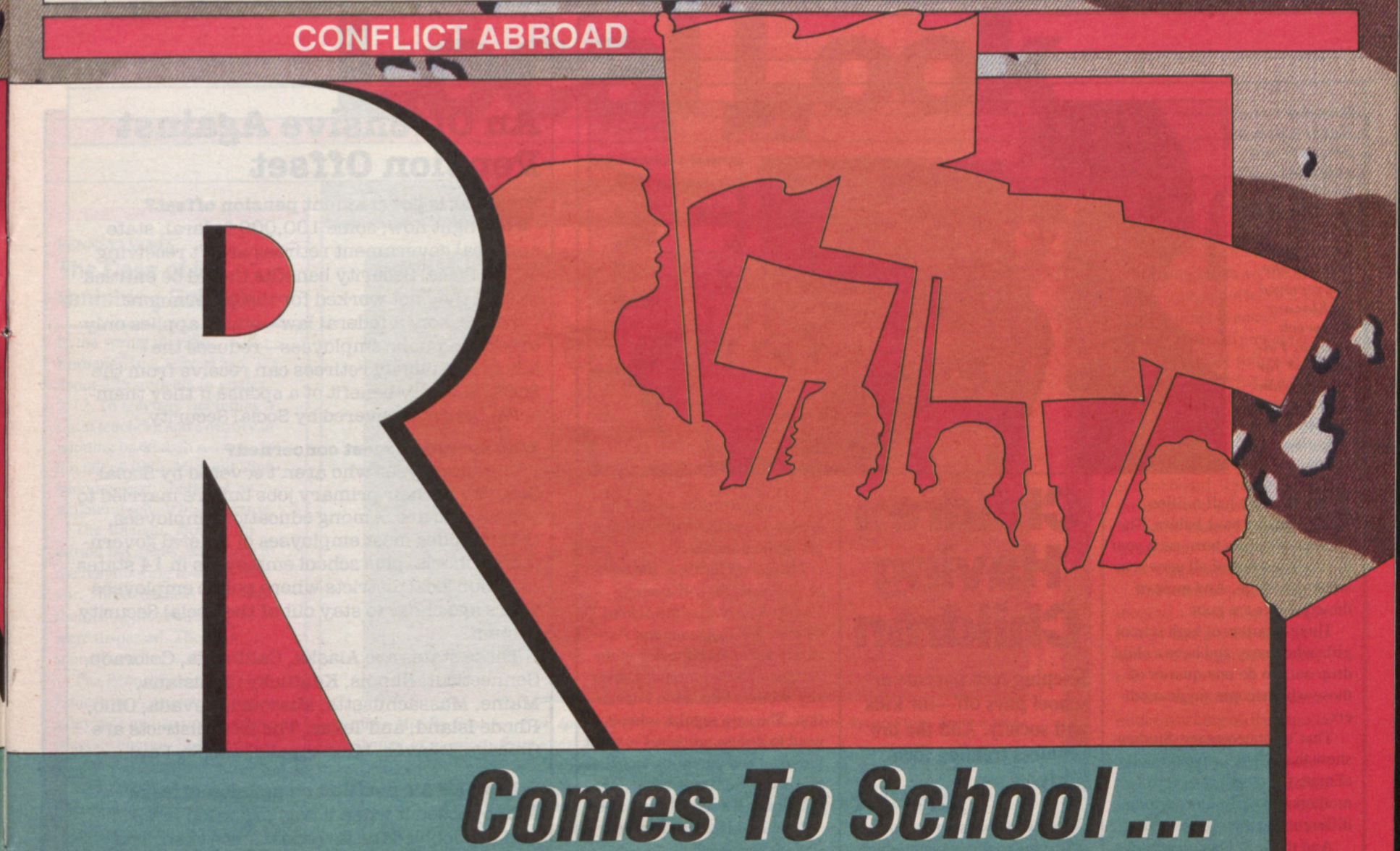
"Now they can explain things to me I didn't know," Hoffmann says, "like how you could safely shoot down a chemical weapon without the explosion poisoning the atmosphere."

War is more than applied science, of course. Other subjects also contribute to our understanding of what it means to be at war.

Literature is one. Kids will read Wilfred Owen's classic World War I poem, "Dulce Et Decorum Est," to study its meter, but also to find out what it's like to be under a gas attack.

In short, the war is not mere fodder for lesson plans. Like it or not, it's providing new avenues for reaching students.

CONFLICT ABROAD



War Comes To School ....

"What we should be offering is critical analysis—discussing the whys of this war."

The Gulf War has also brought a new political reality to school. Once again school is becoming a forum for political expression.

In high schools like Hinsdale South in Illinois, or Rainier Beach in Washington State, formal panel discussions reminiscent of the Vietnam era are taking place.

And once again people have different views on what the political role of the school itself should be, or even on what's "political."

Before war broke out, San Diego sixth grade teacher Peter Brown took issue with the notion of having kids write to the troops. He thought it could imply approval of the war.

"I was shocked that educators would allow kids to be manipulated," Brown argues, "when what we should be offering is critical analysis—discussing the whys of this war."

One factor that complicates politics in schools today is that today's students are not necessarily simply Americans. Many U.S. classrooms today are host to immigrants and citizens of foreign countries.

"I've got Arab students on both sides," one teacher notes. There's even a high school in a Washington, D.C., suburb that, until January 16, enrolled the well-liked son of the Iraqi ambassador.

So while one school may encourage "support for the troops," another bends over backwards to ensure that nothing it does forces a child to express—or even listen to—opinions that are unpalatable.

Take the schools in Clark County, Nevada: "We asked the principals to control student interviews with media so kids wouldn't be pushed into expressing opinions their parents might not like," says Clark County schools communications director Ray Willis.

As for how far students themselves can go in free expression at school, the rules were articulated by the Supreme Court decision in the Vietnam-era *Tinker* case. The line is drawn at interruption of the instructional activities of the school: school authorities can constitutionally forbid expression which does that.

For teachers, the case law is different—their rights to free speech may be related to the age of the students and the subject taught.

But already an elementary teacher in Rapid City, South Dakota, has been discomfited by her district's guidelines to teachers to avoid upsetting students: Teachers, the district has mandated, should keep their opinions about the war to themselves.

"I already told my students I was personally opposed to war as a solution to the conflict in the Gulf," sixth grade teacher Shirley Frederick explains.

"After I saw the guidelines, I just stopped participating in the children's discussion," Frederick says. "But I don't like it, and I think if we don't discuss it, we're failing to prepare students for playing their role in democracy as adults."

War in school? Frightening, stimulating, sad, maybe even dangerous. For the duration.

—Nancy R. Needham

Kids in Wartime: A Booklist

Children today may find illumination in books about children in an earlier war—World War II. Here are some:

Blitzcat (Scholastic, paper, 1989) and **The Machine Gunners** (Knopf, paper, 1990). Robert Westall. England. Fiction.

A Child's War: World War II Through the Eyes of Children. Kati David. Four Walls Eight Windows (P.O. Box 548, New York, NY 10014), 1989. Europe. Nonfiction.

The Devil's Arithmetic. Jane Yolen. Viking. 1988. Poland. Fiction.

The Diary of Anne Frank: The Critical Edition. Netherlands State Institute for War Documentation. Ed. by David Barnouw and Gerrold Van Der Stroom. Doubleday, 1989. Holland. Nonfiction.

In Search of Hiroshi. Gene Oishi. Charles Tuttle, 1988. U.S. (Japanese-American internee). Nonfiction (adult).

In the Eye of War. Margaret and Raymond Chang. McElderry/Macmillan. 1990. China. Fiction.

Snow Treasure. Marie McSwigan. Scholastic, paper. Orig. 1942. Norway. Fiction.

Touch Wood: A Girlhood in Occupied France. Renee Roth-Hano. Puffin, paper. 1989. France. Nonfiction.

And these backgrounders:

(Send $1 to) Kids Ask About War Guide, PBS, 1320 Braddock Place, Alexandria, VA 22314.

Saddam Hussein and the Crisis in the Gulf. Judith Miller and Laurie Mylroie. Times Books. $5.95.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Dorotha Hogue teaches pregnant and parenting teens in Denver's Florence Crittenton Alternative School. She has received an Eleanor Roosevelt Teacher Fellowship for further training on ways to keep girls from dropping out.*

Children Having Children

Keeping teen parents in school pays off—for kids and society. And the law requires treating them fairly.

Each year a half million teenagers have babies. The number of babies born each year to single women of all ages is at an all-time high. And most of these parents are poor.

Three-quarters of high school girls who marry and have a child drop out. So do one-quarter of those who become single mothers.

That's not necessary. Studies show that a supportive school climate for pregnant or teen mothers can make an enormous difference in their dropout rate.

And the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights says one of its major goals is to promote equal educational opportunity for pregnant students.

Still, schools rarely address that goal systematically through their policies and programs.

Quite the contrary: a 1987 survey shows that 75 percent of the nation's schools were violating Title IX. (Title IX prohibits sex discrimination in schools receiving federal funds—and specifically outlaws discrimination based on pregnancy.)

One way that some schools are trying to serve teen mothers is through alternative schools like Denver's Florence Crittenton School, established in 1984. Crittenton math and science teacher Dorotha Hogue has worked with low-income, minority parenting or pregnant teens since the school was established.

"Sixth through twelfth grade students study a core curriculum," explains Hogue, "and they also take career development and parenting courses. The infant care center is right across the hall."

But the school can enroll just 150 young women—and there are always at least 30 waiting to get in the program.

Margaret Dunkle is the author of *The Need for a Warming Trend: A Survey of the School Climate for Pregnant and Parenting Teens* and director of the American Assocation of University Women Education Foundation. She says regular schools need to design programs to meet pregnant and parenting teens' needs early on, rather than rely on alternative school programs.

"Junior highs and middle schools now have the fastest-growing pregnancy rate," explains Dunkle, "yet few have sensible policies to help young mothers stay in school. Most women won't go to an alternative school. Often it's too far away, or—more important—there aren't enough places."

Take a minute to review the standards in the box below. The first step toward getting timely help for pregnant and parenting teens is to check your school's policies on the subject.

—Melissa Etlin
NEA Human and Civil Rights

How Does Your School Rate?

Does your school:

- ► have a plan for retaining or re-enrolling pregnant or parenting students?
- ► excuse absence or tardiness caused by physical problems related to pregnancy? (If not, it's violating Title IX.)
- ► excuse absence for childbirth and recovery for as long as a doctor says is necessary? (No? Another Title IX violation.)
- ► allow an excused absence to care for a sick child? (No? A possible Title IX violation.)
- ► reinstate a new mother to the status she had when her leave began? (If not, that's another Title IX violation.)
- ► provide courses on prenatal and child care?
- ► collaborate with other agencies to provide health, social service, and community services?
- ► help teens find infant care?
- ► cooperate with other schools to develop a range of services for pregnant and parenting teens?
- ► sponsor peer support groups for mothers *and* fathers?

Source: Adapted from various Equality Center publications.

Recommended Readings

How Schools Can Help Combat Teen Pregnancy, NEA Professional Library, P. O. Box 509, West Haven, CT 06516 (3287-X-00-D6). $12.95.

A Stitch in Time: Helping Young Mothers Complete School, The Academy for Educational Development, 1255 23rd St., N.W., Washington, DC 20037. $10.

The Need for a Warming Trend: A Survey of the School Climate for Pregnant and Parenting Teens, The Equality Center, 1223 Girard St., N.W., Washington, DC 20009. $10 prepaid. A shorter version of this report is in the summer 1990 *Journal of Public Welfare*.

*For more information about Eleanor Roosevelt Teacher Fellowships, write to the AAUW Education Foundation, 1111 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036.

WASHINGTON WATCH

An Offensive Against Pension Offset

What is government pension offset?
Right now, some 100,000 federal, state, and local government retirees aren't receiving all the Social Security benefits they'd be entitled to, had they not worked for the government.

The reason: a federal law—which applies only to certain public employees—reduces the amount of money retirees can receive from the Social Security benefit of a spouse if they themselves weren't covered by Social Security.

Who should be most concerned?
Public employees who aren't covered by Social Security in their primary jobs but are married to people who are. Among education employees, that includes most employees of federal government schools, plus school employees in 14 states and four local districts where public employees years ago chose to stay out of the Social Security system.

Those states are Alaska, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Missouri, Nevada, Ohio, Rhode Island, and Texas. The local districts are Chicago, Denver, Minneapolis, and St. Paul.

What's NEA's position on pension offset?
NEA opposed it when it was proposed in 1977 and has lobbied for its repeal since then. The Association charges that the procedure is discriminatory because it affects only public employees. Those who have worked in the private sector continue to collect full benefits—the greater of (1) 50 percent of the spouse's benefit or (2) their own earned benefit.

In 1983, as a result of NEA lobbying, Congress modified the offset from 100 percent to two-thirds. A step in the right direction, but only a step. One of NEA's strongest allies then and now is Rep. Andy Jacobs (D-Ind.), chair of the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Social Security.

NEA continues to lobby for repeal of the law, but it's a lonely, uphill battle. One ray of light: a bill to eliminate the offset—HR 53—has been introduced in the 102nd Congress by Rep. Mary Rose Oakar (D-Ohio). Although the Mideast war and the deficit make passage of HR 53 unlikely any time soon, NEA continues its push.

How does pension offset work now?
The following table gives an example, using $200 as the spousal benefit amount:

	Social Security Spousal Benefit Amount	Public Pension Amount	Social Security Spousal Amount After Offset
Example A:	$200	$150 2/3 of $150 = $100 $200 – $100 = $100	$100
Example B:	$200	$200 2/3 of $200 = $133 $200 – $133 = $67	$67
Example C:	$200	$300 or more 2/3 of $300 = $200 $200 – $200 = 00	$00

What can Association members do to help repeal pension offset?
Let your Senators and representatives know you want them to repeal Section 334 of Public Law 95-216, which authorizes pension offset. Write to U.S. Senate, Washington DC 20510; House of Representatives, Washington DC 20515.

Local Look

PENNSYLVANIA

The Case of the Vanishing School

In the spring of 1986, Midland High School had about 225 students in grades 7-12, 16 teachers (including a Latin teacher), and a history of winning basketball seasons. In the fall of 1986, Midland High had vanished, abolished by unilateral school board action.

The students, along with tuition payments, were sent to the neighboring town of Beaver. Three teachers went with them, and the remaining 13 were dispersed. The high school building was sold.

The Pennsylvania State Education Association filed a grievance and an unfair labor practice charge. Both ended up in the state supreme court.

Last fall, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court refused to hear a final appeal by the school board. The refusal let stand a lower court decision awarding the teachers back pay and ordering Midland to provide high school education.

One clear result: an abrupt stop to similar moves by neighboring school boards.

IN SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

Robert Faaborg

The Middle East teach-in sponsored by the San Diego Teachers Association drew a wide range of opinions from guest speakers and the audience.

A Teach-In on Desert Storm

In San Diego—a city with a large military population—students with family members serving in the Gulf were anxious. Families of Iraqi descent were changing their names. Teachers felt pushed into sponsoring classroom activities they perceived as being pro-war.

To address these concerns and many others, the Human Rights Committee of the San Diego Teachers Association recently sponsored a forum, Children and the Crisis: a Mideast Teach-In.

The Committee invited educators and other school employees, parents, students, and the public to attend and respond to President Bush's "New World Order."

More than 200 people accepted the invitation. They heard 14 speakers, including a college lecturer on the Middle East, the wife of a Desert Storm participant, a school counselor, a Viet Nam vet, a high school student, and a teacher's aide/parent.

Topics included Middle East history, networks for military family support, classroom strategies, and efforts toward peace.

During open microphone periods, about 60 members of the audience voiced their views on matters ranging from military recruitment in schools to teachers' rights to express their personal opinions in the classroom.

The San Diego Teachers Association has compiled a Desert Storm resource packet for teachers that includes a bibliography, newspaper articles, songs, information about military family support networks and more.

To receive a packet, write to SDEA, 10393 San Diego Mission Road, Suite 100, San Diego, CA 92108-2189, Attn: Peter Brown.

OHIO

The 'Super' Was A Secretary

Would you like an administrator to fill your shoes?

The Mentor (Ohio) Classified Employees Association did just that with six administrators this winter. MCEA raffled off six administrators who had volunteered to spend a day doing the winning members' work. Auction proceeds went to Clothe-A-Kid, a local charity for needy children.

"I won the Assistant Superintendent for Business Affairs," says Elaine Spondike, a secretary at Shore Junior High School and NEA Board member. "He fared pretty well, although he disconnected a couple of callers and brought my computer down once."

The other administrators included the school superintendent, who rode a school bus for the day (he couldn't drive because he had no Commercial Driver's License), and the food service supervisor, who worked as a custodian.

"This is more than a chance to donate to a worthy cause," says Spondike. "It's a prime opportunity to show these administrators firsthand that our members are invaluable and deserve greater recognition and respect for the hard work they do."

ILLINOIS

Two Locals Team Up To Help Novices

What's a new teacher's greatest need? Help in classroom management. That's what new teachers in Springfield and Decatur, Illinois, told their Associations, so that's what their Associations provided.

In late January, the two neighboring locals—each representing about 950 teachers—teamed up to sponsor a weekend retreat for 65 teachers, each with less than five years' experience.

On the agenda: lectures from experts, seminars to discuss student discipline, the opportunity to talk with experienced teachers and other novices, and lots of time for questions.

Now the locals are training teacher leaders to deliver classroom management training to larger audiences. In addition, they plan to sponsor quarterly information sessions for new teachers and set up a "buddy system" to pair new teachers with older ones.

WYOMING

WEA Team Gets Board, Local Talking

Last fall a state Association assessment team came to town to advise a very unhappy local affiliate and stayed on to help the school board and administration find common ground with their teachers.

In November, members of Wyoming's Goshen County Education Association—a local operating without a master contract in a nonbargaining state—turned down the district's contract offer of a $500 benefits improvement.

Informational picketing and working to rule followed, and GCEA asked WEA for help. WEA sent in a team.

The team spent two days in the community. They met with the superintendent and school board. Their conclusion: the two sides didn't have the same understanding of terms like "master contract" and "negotiations process."

The team invited management to a workshop on terminology and got the district to agree on a negotiations process.

Now each side has a committee working on the negotiations agreement, a labor department specialist in collaborative bargaining is scheduled to visit, and district officials have attended WEA lobbying dinners.

But, says GCEA President Linda Johnson: "The test of success will be whether attitudes change enough to get a negotiations agreement."

FLORIDA

Local Moves Toward Pay Equity

The Orange Educational Support Personnel Association (OESPA) has won a round in its efforts to achieve pay equity for education support personnel in the Orange County school system.

The local says the county's personnel system, which places 6,000 ESP in 300 different job titles with 44 different pay grades, badly needs an overhaul.

OESPA convinced the district to conduct a joint study of all job titles. The district agreed that NEA's Job Evaluation System—an instrument designed specifically to evaluate ESP jobs—would be used for ferreting out inequities.

The district provided employees with release time to participate in the study.

As a result of the data collected, OESPA was able to revamp the wage structure, using NEA's system to create internal equity among the jobs, and begin equity adjustments.

State Side

OREGON

Working To Restore Budget Cuts

Education First. That's both the name and the objective of a recently formed coalition that includes the Oregon Education Association, the Oregon Department of Education, Oregon's School Board Association, and its Confederation of School Administrators.

The coalition is working on a common agenda for education funding to make up for a property tax limitation measure approved by voters last November.

The measure, which takes effect in the next budget year, limits taxes for schools to $15 per $1,000 of real market value and lowers the limit in each of the next four years.

Coalition backers have introduced state legislation calling for $245 million for education—the estimated amount schools and community colleges will lose in the 1991-93 biennium.

PUERTO RICO

New Education Secretary Named

The NEA-affiliated Asociación de Maestros de Puerto Rico (AMPR) is hailing the appointment of an experienced educator, Celeste Benitez, as Secretary of Education.

The appointment follows a five-year legislative effort that produced what AMPR considers a foundation for innovative changes in curriculum and administration.

Benitez has worked closely with AMPR, notes AMPR President Jose Eligio Velez, and her approach to the island's education problems is in line with AMPR's reform efforts.

TEXAS

TSTA Helps Science Teaching

Texas students will soon have access to science texts that attribute the development of plant and animal species to evolution.

The change rewards the efforts of the Texas State Teachers Association, the Texas branch of People for the American Way, and other free-speech groups.

Last November, for the first time, the Texas board of education—the final body in the textbook adoption process—approved evolution-based biology textbooks.

TSTA president Ollie Besteiro says: "We feel our joint efforts with PAW will benefit not only Texas students but students throughout the United States."

The reason: Texas orders all the texts used in the state's public schools, and its huge orders are widely believed to influence the design of the texts sold nationwide.

KIDS COUNT

Kids' Well-Being Declines in '80s

The eighties weren't kind to kids. That's the message of the *Kids Count Data Book*, a new report from the Center for the Study of Social Policy. The group ranked the 50 states and the District of Columbia on eight indicators of kids' well-being (see below).

Overall, six of the eight factors by which kids' well-being can be judged declined in the eighties; only the infant mortality and child death rates improved.

KIDS COUNT: 1991 National Rankings

1	Vermont	14	Nebraska	27	Oklahoma	40	Arkansas
2	Utah	15	Kansas	28	Missouri	41	North Carolina
3	Massachusetts	16	New Jersey	28	Nevada	42	Alabama
4	Minnesota	17	Colorado	30	California	43	Tennessee
5	New Hampshire	18	Idaho	30	Indiana	44	Arizona
6	Connecticut	19	Montana	32	New York	45	Florida
7	Rhode Island	20	Washington	33	Maryland	46	New Mexico
8	Iowa	21	Wyoming	34	Kentucky	47	Mississippi
9	North Dakota	22	Virginia	35	Texas	48	South Carolina
10	Wisconsin	23	Ohio	36	Delaware	49	Louisiana
11	Hawaii	24	South Dakota	37	Michigan	50	Georgia
12	Maine	25	Oregon	38	Alaska	51	District of Columbia
13	Pennsylvania	26	West Virginia	39	Illinois		

The eight indicators: percentage of babies with low birth weight, infant mortality rate, death rate for children aged 1-14, violent death rate for youngsters aged 15-19, percentage of teens having babies out of wedlock, juvenile incarceration rate, percentage of children in poverty, and percentage of children graduating from high school.

OHIO

OEA Adds 13 New Support Locals

The Ohio Education Association has won 13 representation elections in six months, adding a potential of 1,300 new education support members.

"We've been in an aggressive posture in school support personnel organizing," says OEA Organizing Director David Kessler, "and we're having tremendous success." OEA hasn't lost an election for education support personnel in two years.

The new locals: Shelby, West Muskingum, Xenia, Wood Lane, Sugarcreek, Barnesville, Gallia County, Vandalia-Butler, Buckeye, Columbiana County, Miami, Milford, and Ironton.

RHODE ISLAND

TV Captures Learning Process

How do kids look when they're learning? Starting last fall, Rhode Islanders have had a chance to find out, through a monthly half-hour public TV program called *Rhode Island's Child*.

Solving problems or sailing boats, playing ball or playing in the band—learning in all its aspects shows up in the magazine-format series.

If the program offers behind-the-scenes views of public education, that's no surprise—its creator is NEA Rhode Island.

NEARI members and staff, along with students, parents, and administrators, are the show's hosts and reporters.

IOWA

ISEA, State Leaders Set Education Goals

Iowa's business and education leaders—with input from hundreds of Association members—recently agreed on a new set of goals for the state's education system.

Their report, *The Iowa Initiative for World-Class Schools*, calls for, among other things, prekindergarten programs for all students, ungraded primary schools, up-to-date technology, a longer school year, site-based decision making, and a significant increase in pay for school employees.

In addition, the leaders established a special commission—with ISEA representation—to come up with an educational assessment and accountability system for the state by September 1991.

Meet:

As a nurse in a Harlem hospital, Faye Wattleton saw enough to decide for herself.

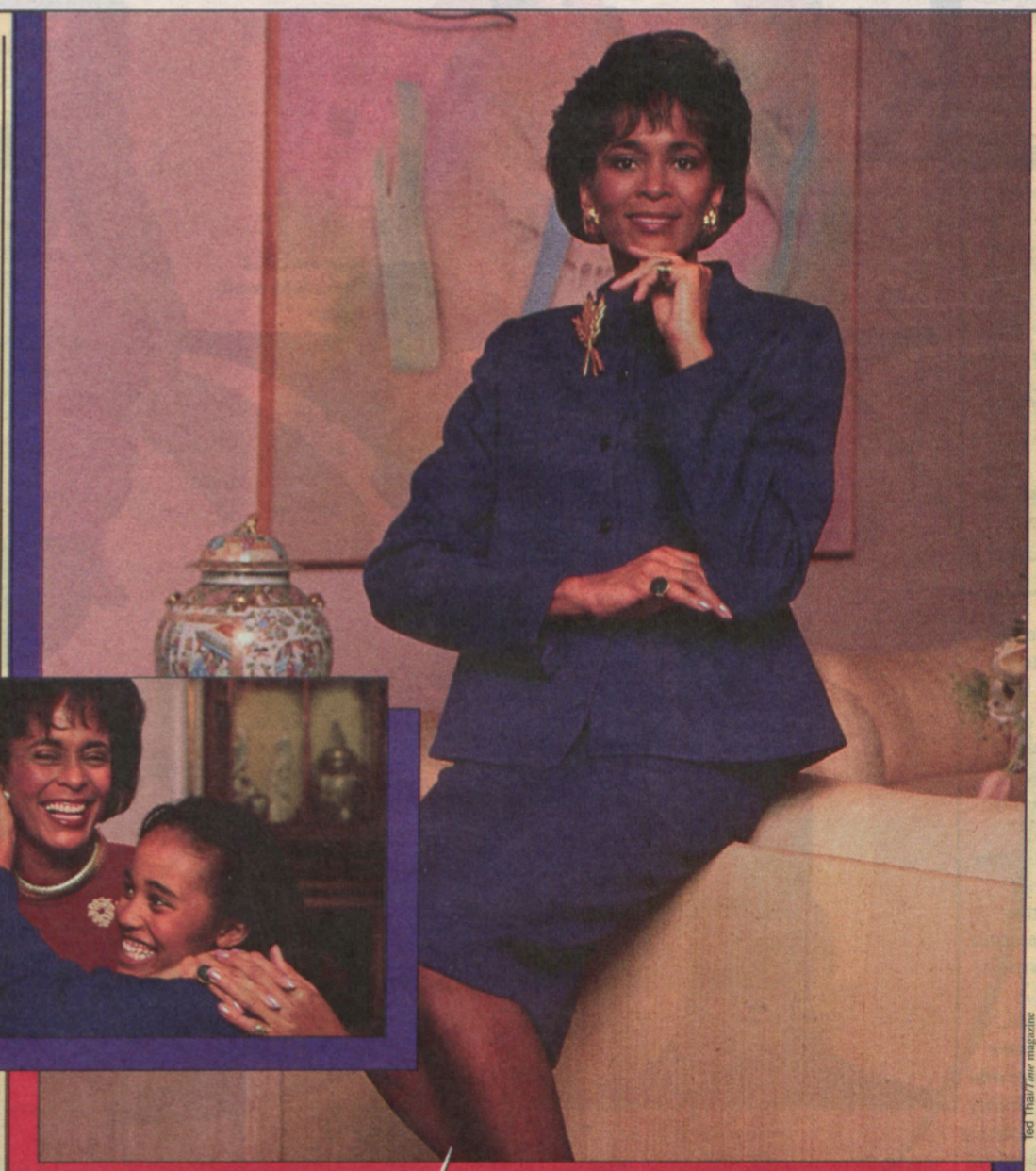
"Unwanted children are among the most unfortunate in our society," she concluded, "but women who are forced to have children against their will are among the most oppressed."

That personal conviction has driven her to the presidency of Planned Parenthood, an international organization that provides education and reproductive health services to 4 million people worldwide.

Wattleton provides leadership to the organization, which has a $350 million budget and comprises 171 affiliates and nearly 900 clinics.

She's also the daughter and granddaughter of fundamentalist ministers, and a parent.

NEA Today *staffer Stefanie Weiss spoke to Wattleton in her New York City office.*



Ted Thai/*Time* magazine

Faye Wattleton

Cool Woman, Hot Topic

Why does the U.S. have one of the highest teen pregnancy rates in the world?
We have very little sexuality education to help our young people understand their sexuality during their developmental years. We don't treat sexuality as something that's important, and we don't constantly reinforce the message of prevention.

Why not?
Some believe that if we talk about prevention, we'll lose a very important weapon against sexual activity: the fear of pregnancy. But that weapon doesn't work for us.

What's the school's role?
Schools can help young people avoid a lot of health problems. In my opinion, the number one goal of school health programs should be to offer preventive services and information.

What kind of information should schools provide?
Our tradition is to do too little, too late. The school's role has tended to be defined as—and confined to—an agent to educate about reproduction, and yet sexuality is much more than that. And understanding sexual development is much more than that.

I think schools should play a much larger role. They should be teaching comprehensive sexuality education from kindergarten through twelfth grade.

What would you teach a kindergartner about sexuality?
First of all, I would approach sexuality education well before she was kindergarten age.

Teaching about sexuality is not just talking about pregnancy and birth and intercourse and that sort of thing, but rather learning about our bodies. What does touching mean? What is good touching? What is inappropriate touching? What are the differences between my body and your body?

Without information and guidance—from parents, religious institutions, schools—our children are left to do the best they can with either an incredible wall of silence that's often put up around this subject or the constant bombardment of sexual messages they get from the mass media and their friends.

Why do so few parents actually deal with their children on this subject?
A lot of parents try, but after all, we are products of our own upbringing, and our parents didn't talk with us. It can be hard to change our attitudes.

Parents don't quite know how to approach the subject, because very often we wait until our kids are adolescents. It's a time when their sexual maturity is coming into full bloom, and it's kind of scary for us. How do we talk with them about sexuality when, at the same time, we don't want them to be sexually active?

But the problem is that we've waited too long. If we had talked about it as a natural part of human development throughout their childhood, it wouldn't be such a charged subject.

Do today's teens have adequate access to reproductive health services?
No. I don't think they have adequate access or information. On average, teens have been sexually active 11 months before they seek family planning.

Is sex education working?
I'm reluctant to join those who say, "We have sex education, but we don't have any evidence that it works," because I haven't seen *real* sexuality education yet.

Even today, only 12 states and the District of Columbia require sexuality education from kindergarten through twelfth grade.

Should schools make condoms available?
I'm amazed that it's a controversial question. First of all, condoms are not illegal in this country. You can buy them without a parent's permission.

I don't think there's anyone who wouldn't prefer to see young people reach adulthood before getting involved sexually. But I don't think anyone would deny that young people are sexually active—and at earlier ages.

Will we hold on to our notion that to mention prevention is to encourage it? Or will we step up to it, and say this is real, these kids are sexually active, now what can we do to prevent disease and pregnancy?

Yes, but aren't we asking too much of our schools?
Schools are institutions, and just like any other institution, they don't have the luxury of doing just one thing and only one thing.

It seems natural to me that school health programs should be as contemporary in the services they provide as we hope they are in the education they offer to children.

Why should an organization like NEA have a position on reproductive freedom?
I suppose the same question could be asked if First Amendment rights were under attack. We don't think that reproductive rights are any less fundamental.

The question is will the government make choices for us, or will we make our own choices?

It seems to me that this issue is fundamental to the integrity of freedom, and that's why it's important for the NEA—or for any other major institution in this country—to take a stand in defense of the right to make an individual choice.

On a lighter note, along with Madonna and Mother Teresa, you were recently named one of *Sassy* magazine's "Twenty Coolest Women." What'd you think of that?
Personally, it helped my fortunes with my 15-year-old daughter—her status with her friends went up a couple of notches. Professionally, I was pleased, too, that young people identify with me and the message that I carry.

COVER STORY

Lucky

They live in Oakland, California, where they go to top-quality pre-schools run by the public school system. They'll be raring to go when kindergarten rolls around.

Every kid should be so lucky.

The wall is covered with paper cutouts of hands. The floor is covered by a dozen three- and four-year-olds, totally occupied in singing "Arms and Elbows 1-2-3."

As a teacher, I see how many kids come to school without the skills they need.

Kneeling on their mats, kids gather around to see the pictures of animals and call out their names. The teacher's assistant repeats "giraffe," "lion," "rabbit"—in English and Cantonese.

I can absolutely tell which kids have been to the child development centers and which ones haven't. I see it in their ability to interact with other kids, to problem-solve, to share experiences, to know their colors and numbers, even to eat in a group.

Outside, the kids race around. Up the hill, down the hill—crash. A scuffle breaks out, interrupted by a watchful teacher who quietly explains the rules.

Some of the kids who didn't have the program have never interacted with other kids, never been to school, have no written language, maybe don't speak English.

Seated in pint-sized chairs around a kid-size table, the eight children eat a morning snack. The teacher explains what they're eating. "Can you say bagel?"

A child who can't say the alphabet is already behind—and here, some drop out by third or fourth grade.

Denise Saddler-Lipscomb, special education teacher and president of the Oakland Education Association, is tired of watching that happen.

An Oakland native, she's bullish on her town and bullish on its solution to educational failure and high dropout rates—state-funded childhood development centers located next door to 22 Oakland elementary schools.

"My vision," she says, "is that we'll have a child development center at every school site."

Saddler-Lipscomb shares that vision with an increasing number of educators, researchers, parents, and policy makers.

As unlikely as it seems in education, there's general agreement: early childhood education works. Even more unlikely, many now agree that it works best when it's tied to public schools.

Longitudinal studies show that children in good preschool programs gain long-term advantages in future school performance, social adjustment, and employment.

One study even shows that preschool education makes financial sense. For each dollar invested, researchers at the Committee for Economic Development found, society saves $4.75 in remedial education, public assistance, and prison costs.

Resources

Over the next six months, the NEA Professional Library will release a comprehensive set of in-service training materials on early childhood education in the public schools.

More than 20 volumes long, the series will cover topics including kindergarten practices, creativity, early literacy, cooperative learning, multiethnic education, and developmentally appropriate practices.

Dozens of nationally known experts—including David Elkind, Bernard Spodek, Constance Kamii, and Milly Cowles—will contribute to the series.

Of special interest: *Perspectives on Early Childhood Education*, a collection of essays by 23 presidents or spokespeople of national education organizations. Each organization's views on early childhood education—now and for the next 10 years—will be included.

The first two books in the series—*Early Childhood Education in the Public Schools* and *Early Childhood at Risk: Actions and Advocacy for Young Children*—are already available.

For more information, write to the NEA Professional Library, Department ECE, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036.

—*S. W.*

Despite the need, most parents of the nation's 7.5 million three- and four-year-olds find the search for good, affordable, and convenient preschools nearly hopeless.

There's been little help from the federal government. In fact, federal support for preschool programs actually declined in the '80s.

In 1990, Head Start served about 600,000 out of 2 million 3-5-year-olds eligible. A boost in 1990 Head Start monies still leaves the preschool program for low-income children vastly underfunded.

In a small way, state governments have begun to step into the void. Only 11 states helped fund preschool education in the 1970s. Now 32 states do, most helping fund Head Start or other half-day programs for at-risk four-year-olds.

California's the pacesetter. This year, California will spend $350 million on early childhood education programs. That's "comparable," its reports say, to what all the other states spend—combined.

The state's commitment to early childhood programs dates back to World War II, when programs programs were established to care for

COVER STORY

Left, more kids from Oakland's centers.

Yak Yau instructional assistant Fanny Chan with some of her charges.

Photographs by Bob Riha, Jr.

the children of women working in factories.

While other states discontinued their programs after the war, Californians maintained theirs. Still, state funding meets the early childhood education needs of only 1 in 10 of California's children eligible for help, a small fraction of all the state's children.

Nearly 2,600 Oakland kids are among the lucky few. They range in age from 3 to 8. The little ones stay for half or whole days; the K-3 students come before and after school.

Mirroring Oakland's diversity, the kids are predominantly minority—Black, Hispanic, Asian, and Native American. They speak 75 languages. Three out of four live in single-parent homes.

The children's families meet the state's definition of low income. The state pays the full tab for most of the kids here. California's contribution to Oakland's year-round program: about $13 million this year.

There's tremendous pride in this early childhood education program—as there should be; it works. Here are five of the many reasons why.

► *The curriculum is "developmentally appropriate."* Forget visions of three- and four-year-olds sitting at long rows of desks filling in workbooks.

"Expert research tells us what's appropriate for early childhood education," says Gloria Ricardo, director of Oakland's program.

"We take the life circumstances of each child into account. Our program is child-driven, literature-driven, and experiential," Ricardo says. "It meets the child's social, emotional, and physical needs."

In other words, kids explore, manipulate, draw, sing, talk, run, measure, listen, and usually conk out at naptime.

► *The centers and the elementary schools work cooperatively.* All four of Oakland's latchkey programs are on-site at elementary schools; all are part of the early childhood effort. Gaye Taylor teaches at one, the Grass Valley Extended School Age Program.

"Our curriculum," Taylor says, "includes a lot of recreation, but also a homework period. So I go into the classrooms to see what they're working on. When a student needs extra help, I meet with the teacher to develop a plan."

Staffs of the child development center and the adjacent elementary schools meet to coordinate activities, exchange ideas, and confer about individual students.

► *The staff is dedicated, well-trained, and organized.* They're all represented by NEA—the 125 teachers by the Oakland Education Association (OEA) and the 180 instructional assistants by Education Support Personnel of Oakland (ESPO).

That makes a difference to Prajna Brooks, a teacher at the Yak Yau Annex with years of previous experience at a non-union private center. "It feels more professional here," Brooks says. "Teachers are constantly going to workshops, improving themselves.

"And I'm being paid about a third more, so I don't have to worry so much about supporting my daughter from paycheck to paycheck. The paid vacation time helps, too. I'm more relaxed. I don't mind putting in extra time."

Most members of Oakland's early childhood staff have been on the job for years—high commitment, good salaries, low turnover. Researchers say that makes a quality program.

A recent national study found that children at centers with stable workforces were more competent in "language and social development" than children at centers with high staff turnover rates.

Children benefit, too, from Association lobbying on behalf of the early childhood program. When faced with budget cuts a few years ago, "union members played a big part in saving the centers," ESPO President Rita Bailey says.

► *The centers involve parents.* Each center has a parent advisory task force, sponsors seminars for parents, and uses parent volunteers.

Belen Zamora was an instructional assistant when she enrolled her son in one of Oakland's centers. "The program helped me become more responsible as a parent. I was drawn into the community, and I was able to finish school."

Now Zamora teaches at one of the centers; her son Edgar, 12, says he wants to be a scientist.

► *The centers welcome—even treasure—the children's cultural and linguistic diversity.* All the centers incorporate multicultural curriculums. But several specialize—some in bilingual instruction, others in cultural pride.

Judy Cabral says her own children attended Hintil Kuu Ca, the center for Native American children where Cabral works as an instructional assistant.

"This school *is* the Indian community for the people of Oakland," Cabral says. "Elders come in and help with the cultural curriculum—teaching kids native languages, preparing traditional foods, stringing beads.

"We prepare the kids for a lot of misinformation, too," Cabral continues, "a lot of distorted history of their people that they'll face in life."

Oakland Education Association President Denise Sadler Lipscomb

"By the year 2000, all children in America will start school ready to learn." So President Bush and the nation's governors have said.

"It is NEA's position," President Keith Geiger told members at NEA regional conferences, "that all other education reform initiatives may count for little—in fact, may count for nothing—unless we devote more attention *and more funding* to the goal of student readiness for learning."

Still, early childhood education is not at the top of Congress' agenda.

Still, states and local communities struggle to find ways to fund early childhood programs they know they need. Even in Oakland, parents and educators spend too much time begging for the money needed to ensure quality.

"Our biggest problem," says Hintil teacher Connie Fay, unknowingly speaking for educators everywhere, "is the person who thinks he can do it for less."

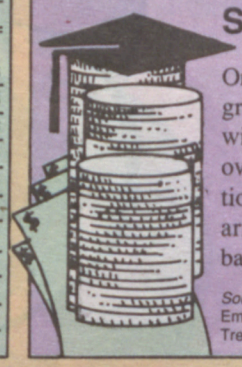
—Stefanie Weiss

DATA BANK

The United States has the world's highest incarceration rate. Of the 1 million inmates in U.S. prisons and jails, nearly 455,000 are Black.

Source: The Sentencing Project, 1989 figures

People imprisoned per 100,000 people	
United States	426
South Africa	333
Soviet Union	268
Hungary	196
Malaysia	126
Poland	106
Turkey	96
Switzerland	73
Italy	60
Japan	45



Starting Salaries

Once again this year, new college graduates with engineering majors will earn the top starting salaries—over 50 percent more than education majors. Estimated starting salaries for 1991 college graduates, based on their college major:

Source: Michigan State University Collegiate Employment Research Institute, Recruiting Trends Survey, 1990

Chemical engineering	$38,114
Computer science	33,238
Nursing	29,449
Marketing/sales	24,273
Personnel administration	23,863
Communications	22,882
Education	21,662
Advertising	21,483
Human ecology/home economics	20,202
Journalism	19,516

Heavier Loads

Since *A Nation At Risk* was published in 1983, 42 states have increased the number of courses required for high school graduation. Here's how the states stack up in four disciplines:

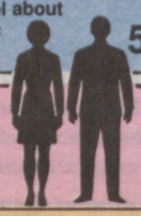
	English	Social Studies	Math	Science
No requirements	6	6	6	6
1 year			1	4
1.5 years		1		
2 years		11	33	36
2.5 years		4		
3 years	7	25	10	4
3.5 years		1		
4 years or more	37	2		

Source: Educational Testing Service, 1990

Parental Involvement

A national survey of parents of eighth graders provides this snapshot of parental concern.

Type of contact	Percent of parents
Visited classroom	28.5%
Contacted school about academic program	34.8
Attended school meeting	49.5
Contacted school about child's academic performace	52.4



Source: U.S. Department of Education, 1988 survey

This year, the hottest topic in the

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First, the Macintosh Classic,® which com-

*With the addition of our new Apple IIe Card available March 1991. © 1990 Apple Computer, Inc. Apple, the Apple logo, Mac, Macintosh and "The

RESOURCES

TV Tips

But He Loves Me—*CBS, Tuesday, March 5, 4-5 p.m. ET (closed-captioned).* This CBS Schoolbreak Special explores the relationship of a high school girl and her abusive boyfriend.

The World's Largest Concert—*PBS, Thursday, March 7, 1-3 p.m. ET (closed-captioned).* Music classes nationwide can play along with this broadcast, produced by the Music Educators National Conference.

For a teacher's guide with performance instructions, student parts, and pronunciation tips, send $2 postage & handling to MENC Publications Sales, 1902 Association Dr., Reston, VA 22091.

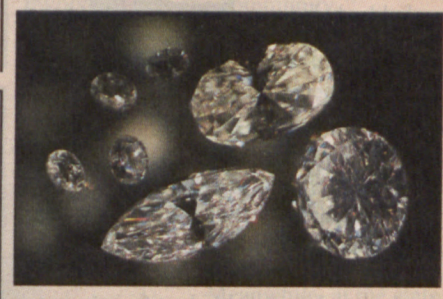
The Perfect Date—*ABC, Thursday, March 7, 4-5 p.m. ET (closed-captioned).* When a young man gets to use the family car, he learns the meaning of responsibility in this ABC Afterschool Special.

A&E Journeys: Fighting for the Forest—*Arts & Entertainment Network, March 10, 9-10 p.m. ET.* A documentary about the Amazonian Indians and their fight for their environment.

The Biggest Movie Ever Made—*PBS, Tuesday, March 12, 8-9 p.m. ET (closed-captioned).* NOVA explores the unique process of making *The Blue Planet*, a film shown on a screen three stories tall.

For a teacher's guide, send $3 to NOVA Teacher's guide, Box 2222-F90, South Easton, MA 02375.

Splendid Stones—*PBS, Wednesday, March 13, 8-9 p.m. ET.* This National Geographic Special looks at the multifaceted world of gems.



The Girl from Mars—*The Family Channel, Saturday, March 16, 8-10 p.m. ET, rebroadcast March 22 and 26, 8-10 p.m. ET.* A young girl's eccentricities cause her family and friends to tease her, saying she must be from another planet. She sets out to prove them right in this original movie.

Frog Girl, The Jenifer Graham Story—*CBS, Tuesday, March 19, 4-5 p.m. ET (closed-captioned).* This CBS Schoolbreak Special tells the true story of a student who defended her right not to dissect a frog in high school biology class, launching a case that went all the way to the state legislature.

It's Only Rock 'n' Roll—*ABC, Thursday, March 21, 4-5 p.m. ET (closed-captioned).* This ABC Afterschool Special follows a young songwriter's plight when one of her songs is taken out of context and a battle ensues between her record producers and the community.

Perfect Harmony—*The Disney Channel, Sunday, March 31, 7-9 p.m.* The love of music brings two boys together. But the year is 1959, the place is South Carolina, and the friendship between the boys—one white, the other African American—aggravates racial tensions in their community.

Quest for Education—*PBS, Sunday, March 31; check local listings.* A look at the educational systems of the U.S. and Japan through the eyes of teenage girls, one from each country, who have lived and attended schools in both countries.

For a free teacher's guide produced by KIDSNET, write to KCET Community Services, 4401 Sunset Blvd., Hollywood, CA 90027.

These listings are provided by KIDSNET, *a computerized clearinghouse for children's TV and radio in Washington, D.C.*

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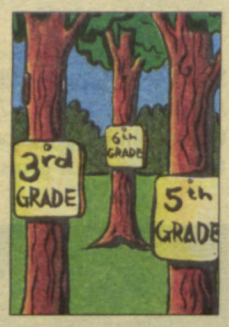
IDEA EXCHANGE

Seeing the Trees And the Forest



Need help identifying a tree? Students at DeAnza Elementary School in San Jacinto, California, can probably help.

Recently, each of the school's 17 classes—plus three staff members and the PTA—planted a different species of tree in the large, flat lot that surrounds the year-old school. The idea came to fourth grade teacher Derstin Brorson when, during a class unit on forests, she found that her students could identify only one tree: the palm.

Brorson felt that the kids would learn much more about different trees by touching and smelling them than by seeing pictures on the bulletin board—and so the idea of a miniforest was born.

To help the youngsters feel that the trees were theirs, Brorson asked them to earn the money to buy them. Students collected aluminum cans, newspapers, and plastic bottles for recycling and did chores for pay in their homes. Contributions from community organizations and individuals made up the balance. The district paid for water pipelines.

A dedication ceremony of the DeAnza Grove—complete with speeches, ribbon-cutting, and music from the school band—culminated the project.

Survival Tips For New Teachers

It's been only one year since Regina St. Clair started her teaching career. But in that time, says the Evansville, Indiana, high school English teacher, she's learned at least as much as in her four years of college. St. Clair offers beginning teachers the following tips:

Ask questions. Veteran teachers often forget what it was like to be new, so they let the newcomer teacher struggle along. But most will help and advise, if asked.

Get involved. By taking part in school activities, you'll get to know your colleagues better. You'll also build good relations with your students, who need to see teachers in a relaxed atmosphere.

Set reasonable goals. Acknowledge that everything in the textbook doesn't have to be covered. Set reasonable limits to what you try to get done, and manage your time to best meet student needs.

Utilize available help. If your school has a student assistant program, let the kids make copies of tests and worksheets, even grade quizzes and objective tests.

Be flexible. Students don't always grasp concepts as quickly as you expect, and school activities often intrude on class time. Learn to go with the building flow.

Realize your limitations. Teaching is a learning process for everyone. As your students learn from you, so you should learn from them. Learn to laugh at yourself and recognize your mistakes.

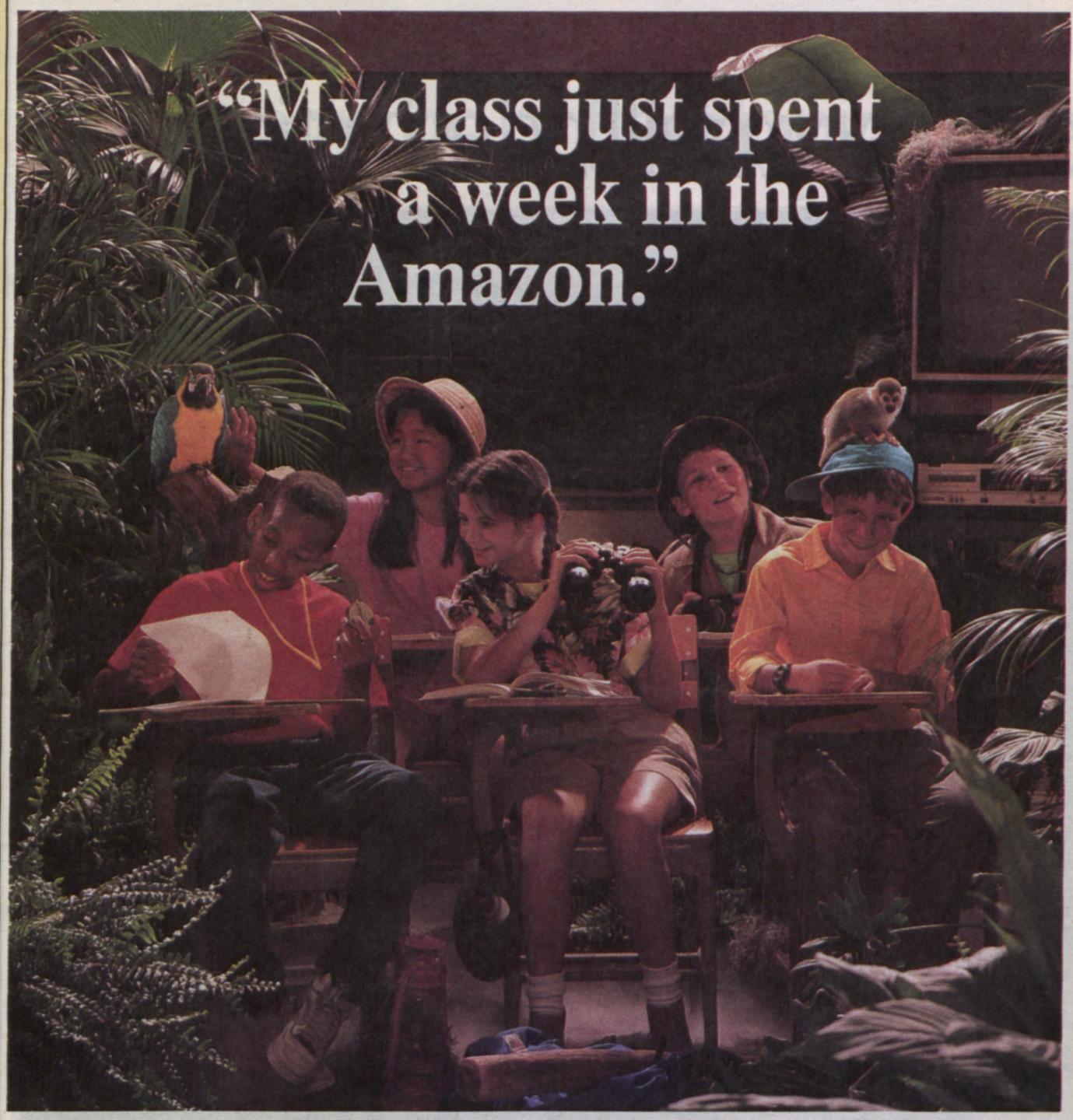
Be yourself. Let your personality show, and encourage your students to relax in class. Students should respect teachers but not fear them.

Cowabunga!

The fact that four popular reptiles—The Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles—are named after four Renaissance artists has inspired art history teacher Mike Backer to create a unique unit for his students at Missouri's Osceola High School.

Backer starts the unit by having the class view the original Ninja Turtles movie. Then, using the library, the students work in four cooperative groups, collecting information on possible links between each turtle personality and the artist for whom he's named. Each group writes reports and presents them in class.

The kids culminate their study by creating appropriate large cardboard/foil bas relief productions. A class favorite shows the original Leonardo with his arm around his 20th century namesake.



"We explored the rain forest using instructional programs from public TV—and it was an involving experience for all of us.

"I found that instructional TV (ITV) helps my students understand many subjects more completely. It engages their curiosity, imaginations and *interest* in ways that textbooks alone can't. Concepts that were just words in a book or vague ideas suddenly take on a concrete shape and become real.

"I found ITV is versatile. You can take your students anywhere on earth, or beyond, to explore just about any environment or culture. You can travel back in time to give your students a context for understanding history or literature. Or demonstrate abstract principles of math or science simply and directly, so students can understand how they work.

"Now, I use ITV regularly, to introduce subjects, amplify key concepts or tie up a particular unit. It's an integral part of my lesson plans, and I follow up with assignments that help students apply what they've learned."

Take a closer look at instructional TV, and find one of the most powerful teaching tools you can use. Contact your public TV station to learn more.

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THE PROFESSION

Setting Standards for Teaching Requires a

Meeting of the Minds

On new professional standard boards, representatives of the public are engaged in a dialogue with teachers that will profoundly influence the future of the teaching profession.

Four years ago, when the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards was just getting started, a business executive on the board shocked teacher members with a question about teacher responsibilities.

"I don't understand," he complained, "why teachers couldn't let parents know right away when their child is having a problem. After class, they should go to their secretaries and get them to call the parents."

"Secretaries! Phones! We howled," says National Board member Sue Hovey, an Idaho social studies teacher who also serves on NEA's Executive Committee. "For us to make a call after class, we'd have had to go down to the front office and stand in line to use the phone!"

Sue Hovey is one of dozens of NEA members across the country now serving on professional standards boards at either the national or state level. These boards are working to set meaningful standards for the teaching profession, but not all the members of these boards are teachers—and that reality sets up some often interesting dynamics.

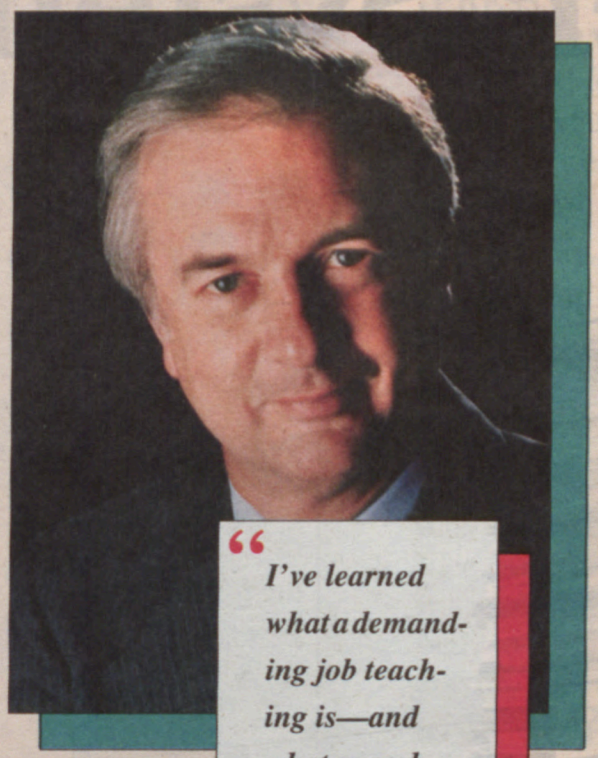
The nonteachers on professional standards boards bring commitment and energy to their charge. But they also bring some misperceptions about what's happening in America's classrooms.

"Nonteacher members of standards boards seem to think that the 'empowered teachers' that we read about already exist," says Len Anderson, a media specialist in Oregon who also serves on the National Board. "The hypothetical world of teaching that they describe is so different from the real world we live in."

"Teaching is a much more difficult and complex occupation than nonteachers recognize," says NEA President Keith Geiger, himself a National Board member. "Teachers are going to have to continue working one-on-one and in small groups with nonteacher Board members to enable them to understand the profession in all its complexity."

The NEA-backed National Board for Professional Teaching Standards is an independent, nongovernmental agency that emerged out of an influential 1986 Carnegie report on restructuring the teaching profession. The board now includes 64 business leaders, state and local policy makers, and educators. Seventeen are NEA members.

It's become apparent that only through dialogue—where teachers can draw the line between myth and reality—are nonteacher members going to understand teachers and the teaching profession.



> *"I've learned what a demanding job teaching is—and what superb talents teachers bring to the task."*
> *—James Hunt*

Former North Carolina Gov. James Hunt, a lawyer and chair of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

> *"A business executive was appalled when teachers told him some of the tools of the trade we do without."*
> *—Sue Hovey*

Idaho teacher Sue Hovey, an NEA Executive Committee member, and member of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

A Mark of Distinction

National teaching certificates will be offered to teachers, on a purely voluntary basis, for the first time in 1993-94. These certificates will, National Board members believe, become a mark of professional distinction.

To facilitate further discussion about the prospects of voluntary national teacher certification, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards will be hosting a series of 30 forums this year.

For more information, contact the Board at 333 West Fort St., Suite 2070 Detroit, Michigan 48226/(313)961-0830.

Over the National Board's first three years of discussions, teachers and nonteachers on the board have come to rely on one another's experience, expertise, and vision, in what amounts to an intellectual cross-fertilization.

Idaho teacher Sue Hovey says she no longer finds herself surprised by the misperceptions of nonteacher members.

NEA President Geiger notes that "Board members have become much more constructive as they've become more in tune with the profession."

As a board member, Geiger says he works to help others understand both the potential and the limits of a national certification process.

"Anybody who thinks that putting in place a national certification process is, by itself, going to improve teaching is mistaken," says Geiger. "It's going to take raising salaries and improving the instruction teachers get in colleges of education, as well as developing tough standards for licensure and certification."

For their part, the nonteachers on the board are impressed by their teacher board colleagues.

"I'm struck by the high quality of teachers I meet who are serving on the Board," says E. K. Fretwell, chancellor of the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. "I see a sense of innovation, as well as a desire to have a greater role in curriculum development and increased involvement in the community."

Former North Carolina Governor James Hunt, chair of the National Board, concurs. "At every meeting," says Hunt, "I get a sense from the teachers on the board just what a demanding job teaching is and what superb talents teachers bring to the task."

Meanwhile, at the state level, similar dynamics are unfolding. Over the years, NEA state affiliate action has helped create a growing number of state-level standards boards.

Autonomous boards that confer licenses and set professional standards are now operating in Iowa, Kentucky, Nevada, Minnesota, Oregon, and California.

All these boards mix teachers and nonteachers. These boards are vehicles for establishing tough and exacting standards for the teaching profession. Nonteachers sometimes have trouble understanding that.

Connecticut social studies teacher Tom Sullivan, who is a member of his state's standards board, says he's sometimes confronted by people who think teachers are out to devise a licensure system of "minimum" standards.

"They're afraid that a teacher majority on the state board means a decrease in accountability," says Sullivan. "They're afraid we're only concerned about protecting our own."

Sullivan argues that it's teachers intent on upgrading the profession who are pushing hardest for rigorous standards.

Oregon's Len Anderson, who serves on his state standards board as well as the National Board, says that public members bring some interesting myths about teaching to the Oregon Standards and Practices Board. But he laments the traditional roles teachers have assumed on the state board.

On the Oregon board, says Anderson, teachers often defer to the people with more status—the administrators—which is why Anderson finds service on the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards so refreshing.

On the National Board, he says, there's unhesitating deference to teachers. "The teacher is the expert," says Anderson.

And part of that expertise, NEA members who serve on state and national professional standards boards agree, means being able to help nonteachers understand what teaching is all about.

—Vicky Lytle

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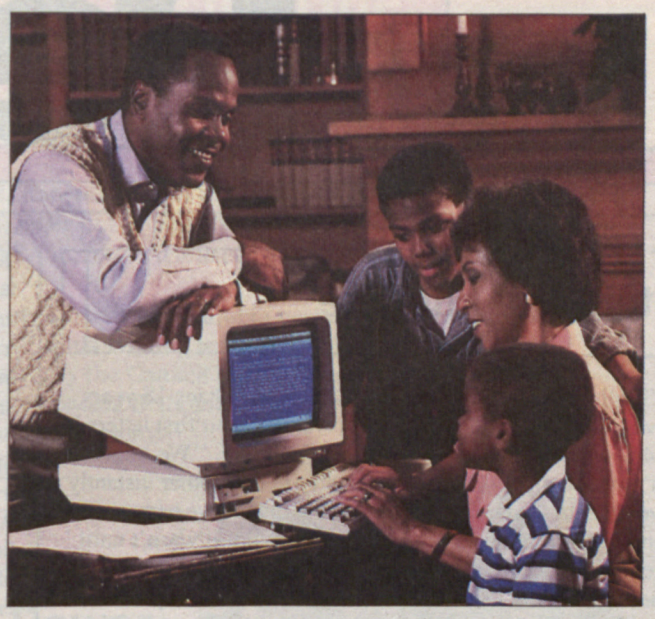

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People

Literally a Lifetime

Phyllis Yingling and Diane Brace have shared joys and tears for 46 years—although they didn't meet until 1962.

The two women are pen pals—Yingling writing from Baltimore, Maryland, where she teaches the hearing impaired at Parkville High School, and Brace from London, England, where she's president of the North London Vocational College.

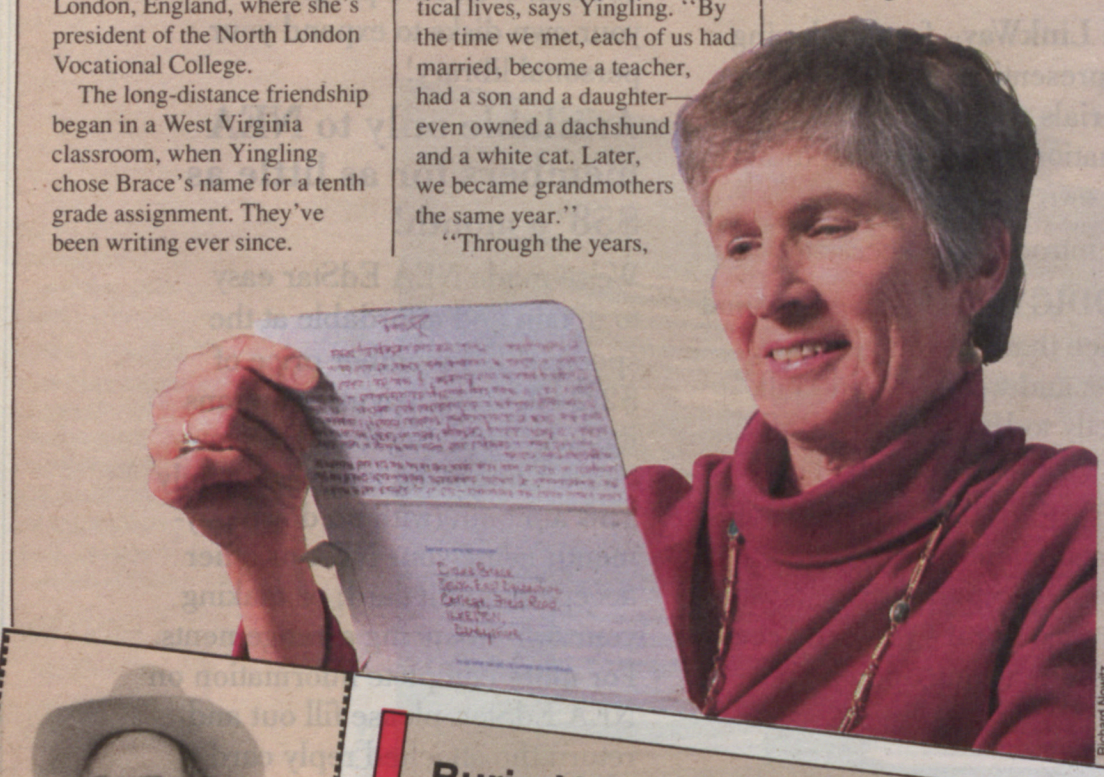
The long-distance friendship began in a West Virginia classroom, when Yingling chose Brace's name for a tenth grade assignment. They've been writing ever since.

"I first saw Diane 18 years after we wrote our first letters," recalls Yingling. "We recognized each other instantly from the photos we had exchanged. But it wasn't until then I realized she had beautiful red hair, because our photos were all black-and-white."

The two have led nearly identical lives, says Yingling. "By the time we met, each of us had married, become a teacher, had a son and a daughter—even owned a dachshund and a white cat. Later, we became grandmothers the same year."

"Through the years, our letters have been filled with talk of politics, our families, and of course, education," adds Yingling. "We've told each other things we'd never tell anyone else."

The two friends see each other every five or six years, trading off visits to England and America. "And though we're far apart, we couldn't be closer," notes Yingling, who encourages her own students to write to pen pals. "Our letters hold us together."



Richard Nowitz

Honoring a Home-Grown Talent

Author Dori Sanders (inset photo) got a hero's welcome when she visited **Brenda Garver**'s English classes at Clover High School in South Carolina. Sanders is a hometown hero, and no wonder: her bestselling novel's titled *Clover* (Algonquin Press, $13.95).

The book, set in a South Carolina peach orchard, tells the story of a 10-year-old Black girl growing up with her white stepmother after her father's death. Sanders herself grew up on a peach farm about 10 miles from Clover High.

By the time Sanders visited, Garver and her students had studied the novel in depth. Welcoming words and imaginative projects inspired by the book covered classroom walls. Sanders spoke with each of Garver's classes about the art of writing and autographed copies

Jerry Sanders

Buried Wheels Head West Again

In 1989 **Dwight French,** a vocational teacher at Wyoming's Sheridan High School, and three friends put out the word they were looking for a wreck. Not a junked car, but the remains of a covered wagon from pioneer days. They wanted to restore a wagon, then drive it in a week-long wagon train along part of the old Bozeman Trail last fall.

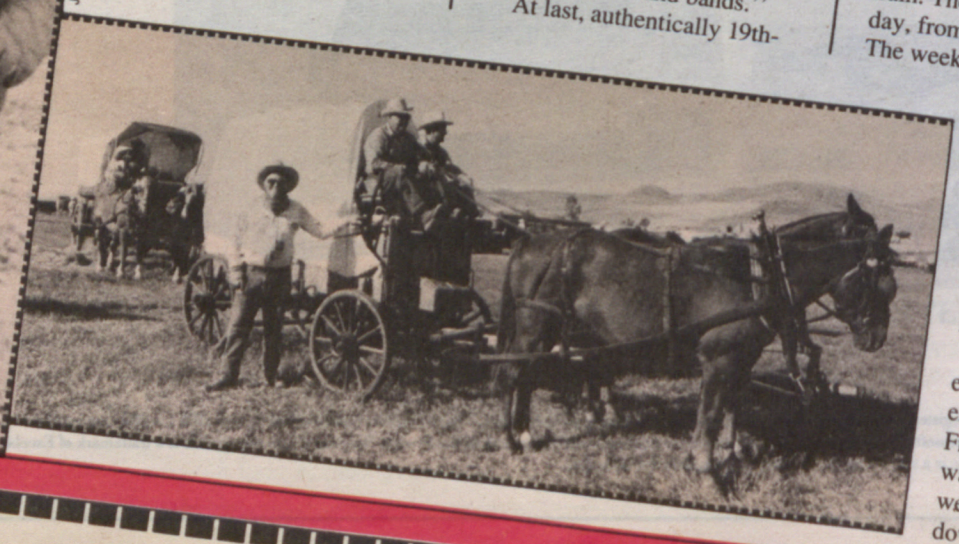
"Someone found us a wagon in the sandhills of western Nebraska," French explains. "but all we were able to salvage was the wheels and axles."

"We went to a restored wagon to get measurements for a new wooden frame and bows to hold the canvas top. My students helped smith new metal brackets and bands."

At last, authentically 19th-century in both costume and equipment, French and his companions joined the wagon train at its staging area in Ucross, Wyoming.

Some 500 people, in more than 100 wagons and on horseback, from all over the U.S. and abroad, made up the train. They drove 10 miles a day, from Ucross to Big Horn. The week's trip covered just a small portion of a route that once allowed Oregon-bound settlers to avoid hauling their wagons over the Bighorn Mountains.

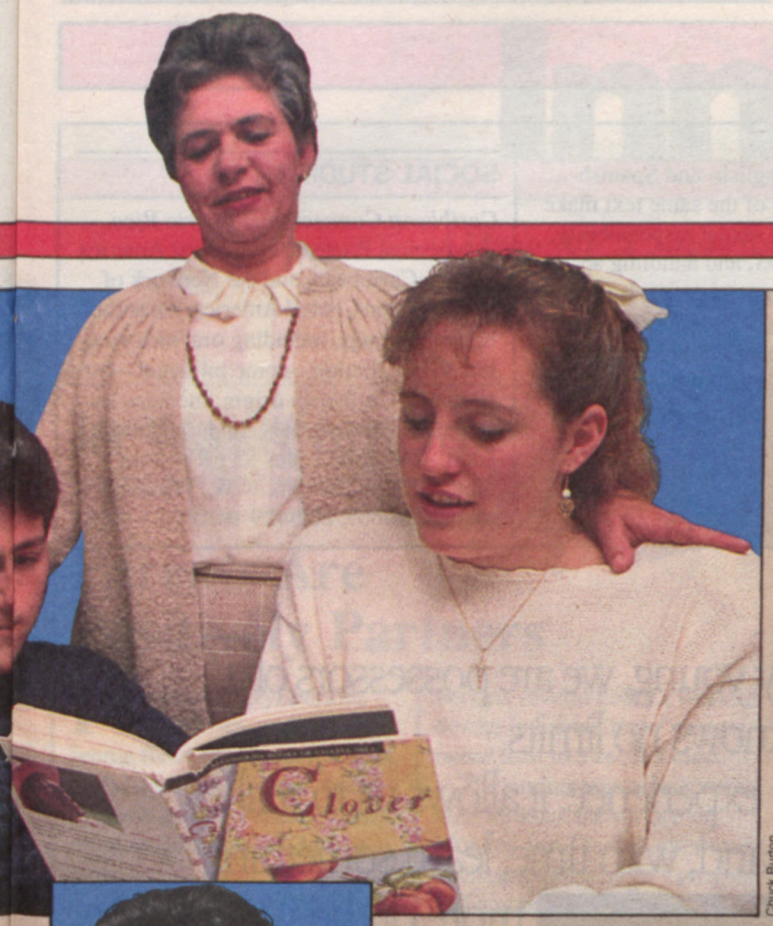
"That was one exhilarating experience," says French. "Afterwards it took me a week to come down."



Unbounded by

Connie Wyant goes scuba diving, flies airplanes, and races hot air balloons. That's when she's not teaching.

Her fifth graders at Durbin Elementary School in Noblesville, Indiana, transform pizza boxes into lunar colonies, appliance cartons into airplane cockpits, and tissue paper into six-foot hot air balloons. When they're done, they've studied



Chuck Burton

Paul Shuman

of her book.

"I've never seen such enthusiasm for a classroom activity," observes Garver. "It was a thrill for all of us."

"She came into our classroom and shared her life openly with us," wrote Garver's students in the introduction to their literary magazine, which they dedicated to Sanders.

"Unlike many figures who 'make it big,' she didn't separate herself from things that mattered. She encouraged us to read, not only for pleasure, but also for education. She wasn't only reciting words of a speech; she had the experiences."

the Ordinary

Tom Strickland

everything from writing to physics to history.

Every day's an adventure when your imagination's on fire: that's Wyant's philosophy. Raised in rural Indiana—where land is flat and visibility is good—Wyant was awed by a cousin who test-piloted X-15s in the days just before the first Apollo space mission.

Since then, she's become an explorer of "the two great unknowns—space and the ocean." And for 17 years Wyant, a certified aerospace educator, has taken her students along for the ride.

"I want my students to know that learning goes on for your whole life," she says. "If you can dream about the unknown—the future—you'll keep on learning and growing."

Four Finalists Vie for Title:

1991 National Teacher of the Year

Each year since 1952, state teachers of the year have competed for the honor of becoming National Teacher of the Year. Next month one of four finalists —including the two NEA members featured below—will be chosen 1991 National Teacher of the Year.

The other finalists are District of Columbia prekindergarten teacher Shirley Hopkinson and West Virginia reading teacher Rae McKee. The national competition is sponsored by the Council of Chief State School Officers in partnership with Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc. President Bush will honor the winner at a White House ceremony.

Shirley Rau:

Sharing the Power Of Language

Pam Benham

When **Shirley Rau**, Idaho's Teacher of the Year and 12th grade English teacher at Nampa High, heard she was a finalist in the National Teacher of the Year competition, she was overwhelmed.

"I'm not unique," she says, explaining that the qualities that make a Teacher of the Year are the same ones that make any good teacher—and of those there are many.

Contending for the title is interesting and fun, but it's not a priority for her. What is important is what's happening in her classroom.

And often that's a dialogue between Rau and her students. Most students feel powerless, she says. Writing or talking about their ideas gives them validity. Rau helps them learn the potential power of those ideas.

"Conducting a dialogue also means I learn as much from the kids as they do from me," Rau emphasizes.

Rau is a 1978 graduate of Idaho State University and a 1985 graduate of the master's degree program at Middlebury College's Bread Loaf School of English. She coaches Nampa's cheerleading team and was, in fact, named Cheerleading Coach of the Year in 1989 by the International Cheerleading Foundation.

Of her upcoming interview by a panel of educators, Rau says, "I'm just going to enjoy the opportunity to visit other teachers, to see what they're doing, and to find out if we have any common concerns. Hopefully, it will be an opportunity to enrich what I do in my own classroom."

Beatrice Kramer Volkman

Playing to Students' Strengths

Thigpen Photography

Beatrice Kramer Volkman has always been interested in the "kids who don't try" in school, the ones whose "reputation precedes them."

As arts facilitator for two new magnet schools for the creative and performing arts in Mobile, Alabama, Volkman's had a chance to try out her instincts and theories about teaching those students.

"I've always tried to teach according to the way a child learns best," explains Volkman. "Children are either visual, auditory, kinesthetic, or tactile in their learning." She herself favors methods that are definitely high energy—for example, "a song-and-dance that teaches multiplication tables."

Volkman believes teachers can make learning relevant to students by integrating art, music, and drama into the curriculum. She also advocates going beyond the four-walls-and-a-lecture format, restructuring classrooms according to students' learning styles and needs.

"I can't just sit and lecture to a heterogeneous group of learners every day," Volkman says. Instead, she advocates the whole language or holistic approach that builds on the real world of the learner.

The Alabama teacher believes in peer coaching. She has designed and conducted workshops to help teachers and future teachers work out ways to teach the learning disabled and build those students' self-esteem.

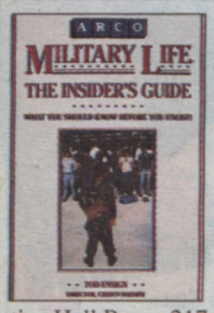
RESOURCES

Free or Inexpensive

MENTORING

Mentor Teacher Programs. Sandra J. Odell. A research review that focuses on the how-to's of implementing mentor programs for teachers who are looking for help with their teaching. 32 pp. $3.95. Stock no. 1086-8-00-FF. NEA Professional Library, P.O. Box 509, West Haven, CT 06516, (800) 229-4200, FAX (203) 933-5276.

COUNSELING



Military Life: The Insider's Guide. Tod Ensign. A lawyer and veteran's rights activist warns about recruitment pitfalls and tells enlistees how to get the most out of their military service. Arco/Prentice Hall Press. 217 pp. $12.95. From booksellers.

'FREE 'N CHEAP'

Free Stuff for Kids. A compilation of sources young people can write to when they want free information on topics like tourism, hobbies, sports, and games. 1991 ed. 120 pp. Order no. 0-671-72562-9. $4.95 from booksellers, or $6.20 postpaid from Meadowbrook Press, 18318 Minnetonka Blvd., Deephaven, MN 55391.

SCIENCE

Did Comets Kill the Dinosaurs? Isaac Asimov. Asimov, who writes science nonfiction as well as science fiction, here explores the scientific evidence that comets caused the extinction of the dinosaurs. Ages 7-10. 32 pp. $4.95 from booksellers.

HEALTH

Stuttering and Your Child: Questions and Answers. Seven authorities on stuttering give up-to-date information about how to handle children who stutter. 64 pp. $1 incl. p&h. Speech Foundation of America, P.O. Box 11749, Memphis, TN 38111.

Decisions About Sex **and** ***Decisiones***

Sobre El Sexo. English- and Spanish-language versions of the same text make basic points about sexual responsibility, birth control, AIDS, and handling an unwanted pregnancy (abortion is mentioned as an option). 10 pp. Prices are listed per title, prepaid. Single copy, 75¢; 2-350 copies, 40¢ each; more than 350 copies, 30¢ each. Add 15 percent p&h. Planned Parenthood of Westchester/Rockland, 175 Tarrytown Rd., White Plains, NY 10607.

SOCIAL STUDIES

Caribbean Connections: Puerto Rico. Ecumenical Program on Central America and the Caribbean, and the Network of Educators on Central America. An anthology of readings, including oral histories, interviews, fiction—some bilingual—by people of Caribbean origin. Includes lesson plans. Audience: secondary, college, adult. 108 pp. $12 plus $3 p&h, from NECA, 1118 22nd St., N.W., Washington, DC 20037, 202/429-0137.

When we are very young, we are possessors of a splendid gift: a mind that knows no limits.

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To learn how your local school can obtain these films, write to: Educational Films, Phillips Petroleum Company, 16C-4PB, Bartlesville, Oklahoma 74004.

Innovation

How NEA members are changing the way schools work

In Washington

Above right: At Reed Elementary, teacher Cheryl Perkins helps Teah Bennest learn her numbers. Above left: Parent volunteer Cindy Sawyer asks student Jamell Alexander about a painting he's created.

Parents Are Positively Partners

Parents of Cheryl Perkins' kindergarten students at Jennie Reed Elementary School in Tacoma, Washington, spend as much time in Perkins' classroom as their kids do. Maybe more.

Every day from 9 to 1:45, Perkins works with the youngsters. After 1:45, she works with their parents. Most of the parents also regularly volunteer time during the school day.

The two-year-old program is funded by part of a five-year, $50,000 Schools for the 21st Century grant awarded to Reed Elementary by the state of Washington in 1988. The grant also provides for teachers in all of Reed's futuristic programs to work 10 days beyond the regular contract year. The teachers use this extra time for planning.

For Perkins—one of Reed's two kindergarten teachers—the grant means the luxury of having just one class instead of the usual two half-day ones. Perkins' class, called Extended Day Kindergarten, meets for two hours and a quarter longer than the usual time. But that still leaves Perkins several hours a week to devote to her students' parents rather than to a second class.

The parents take turns meeting with Perkins one-on-one on Monday and Tuesday afternoons to discuss the children's progress and any problems.

Wednesday and Thursday afternoons are for informal get-togethers. Over coffee and cookies, Perkins and the parents discuss everything from early intervention programs to neighborhood problems. Usually a specialist is on hand to talk about things like nutrition and childhood illness.

Perkins keeps Friday afternoons to herself—it's her chance to catch up.

A small group of kindergarten teachers and early childhood education specialists from Jennie Reed spent the first year of the grant developing the Reed program, which they see as a way to entice parents into the classroom early on. They're hoping that once parents try involvement, they'll like it—and stay involved for as long as their children are in school.

At the beginning of each school year, Perkins phones her students' parents to set up visits at home or at school. At these meetings, Perkins explains how important a home-school partnership is to a child's education.

"I tell parents they're their children's number one teachers," Perkins says, "and my job is to help them."

Most important, she stresses that she really needs the parents' help in the classroom.

Let there be no excuses: Perkins' classroom has playpens for preschoolers, the school bus will pick up parents who have no transportation, and the ESL teacher will translate for parents who don't speak English. Many local businesses that employ parents let them take extended lunch hours to go to the school.

Once in Perkins' classroom, the parents dive right into whatever's going on—perhaps distributing paints or closely watching what a youngster is doing. They observe how Perkins interacts with the kids. Often they leave with a book or game to share with their children at home.

Once a month, Perkins sponsors a fun night for her students and their families. Each evening has a different theme: an obstacle course in September, a puppet show in November, a dance in February. "Everyone—from toddlers to great-grandparents—has a great time," Perkins says.

Has the program paid off? Last year, with 28 students, Perkins had 23 parent volunteers each week. This year she has 24 kids and 22 regular volunteers.

She's gotten to know her students and their families as never before. Parents don't hesitate to invite her to their homes—and most seem to consider Perkins' classroom a second home.

A large percentage of the parents Perkins has worked with are active in the school's PTA. They're among the first to volunteer for school projects.

One more measure of success: the school hopes to expand the program. As Perkins says, "These parents are too valuable a resource to ignore."

—Diane Dismuke

In Kansas

For 3,000 Kids: An Enriching Experience

What does it take to lure several thousand kids away from the parks and playgrounds, the courts and the pools in the heat of summer?

In the Shawnee Mission school district, just outside Kansas City, it takes Discovery and Exploration, the names of two instructional programs offered to kids from preschool through eighth grade.

This summer school program, which is about to begin its fourth year of operation, has blossomed into an enrichment extravaganza attracting nearly 3,000 kids, many from neighboring school districts.

Discovery courses for kids in preschool through eighth grade aim to whet students' appetites in a variety of disciplines—foreign languages, communications arts, math, nature and science, and drama.

The Exploration programs offer students in grades five through eight the opportunity to take more specialized courses (in more intensive ways than the Discovery courses) in areas that especially interest them. Courses cover a wide range of topics—art, drama, sports, math, and science.

Shawnee Mission also runs a summer preschool kindergarten readiness program for four- and five-year-olds.

The program is financially self-supporting, raising funds from student tuition payments and paying them out in salaries and operating costs.

It will cost about $350,000 to run the program this summer. Summer school teachers (approximately 20 of them) are paid their regular wages.

Dozens of teaching assistants—college students from all over studying to be teachers, as well as high school students who think they want to enter teaching—are paid a better-than-average hourly wage.

There are other courses to pique any kid's interest. A reporter visiting the summer session last year found kids making hot air balloons, preparing French pastries, playing "nature bingo" in the outdoor environmental lab, rehearsing for a play, cooking hot dogs with solar panels, and making miniature Russian dolls.

Global Village is one of the program's most popular courses. College students from different countries teach younger kids about their homelands, traditions, and way of life.

Another popular course lets kids care for a variety of animals, from goats to turkeys.

The enrichment sessions run from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., five days a week, from mid-June to the beginning of August. Before-and after-school care are available, too.

"The program just took off," says NEA member Dean Jernigan, the summer enrichment program's director. Jernigan teaches environmental education during the regular school year.

"Students and teachers have told us, 'this is what real school should be,'" says Jernigan. "It's fast paced, classes are small, and the teachers are more facilitators than lecturers. What's more, parents don't have to worry about where their kids are."

Shawnee Mission's summer enrichment program, modeled after a national award-winning summer science enrichment program, is attracting inquiries from all over the country—even some from abroad. Early childhood education advocates point to Shawnee Mission's kindergarten readiness component as especially effective.

NEA's National Center for Innovation has designated this successful program as "exemplary"—one that other schools may wish to emulate.

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HEALTH

WHAT DO YOU SAY ABOUT WAR?

War is hell ... on everybody. It can be especially painful for young people, even here on the home front. Your understanding and reassurance can help. The Practice Directorate of the American Psychological Association offered these suggestions early in February.

Why should educators be concerned about the war's effects on students?
Kids spend a good part of their day at school, so many of their concerns will be apparent in the way they behave in school.

That's why school personnel and parents should collaborate to help students understand and cope with stressful events.

How are students reacting to the war in the Persian Gulf?
Many are anxious because they have family members involved in the conflict. Some may be worried about the stress and anxiety they see in their parents.

Others are fearful that the conflict might spread and involve their loved ones, or threaten them in some other way. Still others may empathize with peers who have loved ones in the Gulf, or they may have misconceptions about the nature and effects of the conflict.

What variation can we expect in the ways students behave?
Students may respond to the Gulf conflict in different ways depending on their age, their maturity, and how directly involved a family member is.

For example, young children will think of events in concrete terms and need physical contact and examples to feel safe.

Older students may ask more detailed questions and be able to follow abstract arguments.

What outward signs might students affected by the Gulf events show?
Some will be anxious, which may cause difficulty concentrating on school work or other familiar and routine tasks.

Others will express anxiety through intense fear that may be unrealistic and difficult to calm, uncharacteristic shortness of breath, nervous movement, or skittishness.

Students who have difficulty separating from family members or other loved ones are especially likely to have these reactions, revealing their ambivalence, confusion, or irritability. Or their feelings may show up in increased attention-getting or risk-taking behaviors.

Some students may seem despondent. These may be slipping into a depression. Depressed students may be sad all the time, withdraw from friends or routine activities, or lose their appetite.

Or they may start having sleep problems or nightmares or start crying for no reason. They might also reveal a sense that the war is unreal.

Over time, if students' emotional distress persists untreated, they may skip school, turn to drugs, or think of suicide.

Be alert to students with intense or dangerous responses and refer them to the school psychologist or other specially trained school personnel.

How should educators handle the war in their classrooms?
They can provide outlets for students to demonstrate some control over the perceived threats.

For instance, they might have students visualize positive scenes, participate in study groups on the war, or write to pen pals in countries closest to the conflict.

They might try setting up a learning station focused on the Middle East. Maps, geographic and cultural information, and news clippings could be placed in the station.

Providing discussion time that allows students the opportunity to express concerns related to the conflict and related crises may help.

School personnel should also be supportive and empathetic while clarifying war-related misconceptions. They should avoid taking political positions—remember, students can get information elsewhere.

Remember, too, that young children will continue asking questions until they understand. Educators should be especially patient with repeated questions about the conflict.

For students who do not wish to participate in discussions about the war, teachers should provide alternatives that are consistent with policy and family values.

Finally, school staff members should collaborate with the school psychologist, counselors, nurses, and administrators to ensure the availability of appropriate classroom-based support services.

Which students may need special support?
Arab American and Jewish students are likely to experience particular strains at this time.

What kinds of feelings might these students be having?
Arab American students may be targets of anger and misguided aggression on the part of peers and other community members. They will benefit from the protection, reassurance, and support of the adults in their schools.

The experiences Arab American students have with their families and loved ones are likely to be positive.

Consequently, they may be confused by the negative generalizations they hear about Arabs. Unaltered, these generalizations could have negative implications for the self-concept and behavior of these students.

Besides their concern for the American troops in the Middle East, both Jewish and Arab American students may be concerned about relatives they might have in Israel or in the Arab countries.

What about the students who don't ask any questions?
Keep in mind that children who are more reticent about asking questions need information, too.

Children over 10 often will not ask questions because they're afraid to look stupid in front of their peers. These children may have a greater tendency to develop fears and anxieties as they interpret the war through misinformation.

You can help them by reassuring them, talking with them one-on-one, and letting them know you're available to talk when *they're* ready.

What if I need more help?
If you have additional questions on how to work with students during this critical time, contact your local school psychologist, your state school psychological association, or your state or regional psychological association.

For a bibliography on crisis intervention during times of conflict, write to Ronda C. Talley, Ph.D, Practice Directorate, American Psychological Association, 1200 17th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036.

TECH TALK

A Bridge Between Generations

It's an on-line intergenerational love story. Special education students and senior citizens learn about each other and their worlds, all by computer.

Larry Salzman

New friends: Eric Kuehlewind (left) and Bruno Borromey. Technology brought them together.

The idea, says Robert Baynes, has always been in the back of his mind. "I've always thought senior citizens had a bank of knowledge we haven't fully tapped," says Baynes, a curriculum resource consultant for the Genesee Intermediate School District in Flint, Michigan.

"And I knew there were kids in our district who could benefit from having a foster grandparent."

The problem was to link them together. Bayne's solution: the Tele-Foster Grandparent Program. "We received a grant to provide senior centers with Apple computers and established the link with schools," Baynes explains. He now coordinates the exchange between senior citizens and special education students at more than 100 senior citizen centers and school districts across the country.

"This is much more than a pen-pal program," Baynes explains. "The kids and the seniors talk by computer about everything—their worlds, their likes and dislikes."

Most of the time, they talk about the past. The students ask about the seniors' memories of the Berlin Wall, the UAW sit-down strike, the Depression.

The seniors ask questions of their own: Do you worry about drugs at your school? What kind of subjects do they teach you? What *are* Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles?

"These exchanges are a delight to watch," says Baynes. "The students' teachers tell me the kids can't wait to see who answered their questions, and the seniors no longer feel isolated. Talking on-line makes them feel closer together."

The project has had a positive impact on at-risk students as well. "Some students' attendance is up, their interest-level is high, and they can't wait to get to the computer."

For more information on the Tele-Foster Grandparent Program, contact Robert Baynes at the Genesee Intermediate School District, 2413 West Maple Ave., Flint, MI 48507.

Read between the Lines

President Bush has signed into law the Television Decoder Circuitry Act, which requires that all new television sets with screens larger than 13 inches be built with decoder circuitry in order to receive closed-captioned programming. The new law becomes effective July 1, 1993.

Closed-captioning translates the audio portion of a program into written words displayed on the bottom of the screen, enabling deaf and hearing-impaired persons to enjoy TV programs.

Currently, you must buy a separate decoder at a cost of $160 to $200. The built-in decoders will increase the price of TV sets by only $5 to $15 each.

Several studies have indicated that closed-captioned TV improves word recognition, reading comprehension, and language retention.

—Anita Merina

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McAuliffe Educators Named

A teacher from Kentucky, whose students publish an insightful annual journal, and another from Maryland, who leads her district in using interactive television for learning, are among five teachers named 1991 Christa McAuliffe Educators by the National Foundation for the Improvement of Education, the foundation created by NEA.

Teachers from Indiana, New York, and Washington won the other three McAuliffe honors.

This year's McAuliffe Educators were chosen for leadership in using telecommunications to reorganize schools for a diverse and changing society that depends on the rapid transfer of large amounts of information.

The Christa McAuliffe Institute, now in its fourth year, was created by NFIE in memory of the teacher-astronaut who lost her life in the 1986 Challenger space tragedy. The Institute's mission is to encourage teachers to explore the art and science of teaching. McAuliffe Educators are teachers who exemplify McAuliffe's leadership, excellence, and spirit of innovation.

Meet the 1991 Christa McAuliffe Educators:

► Elizabeth Barrett is an instructional technology specialist at Penn High School in Mishawaka, Indiana. She works with students and teachers in the school's new communications center. The center uses fiber-optic cable and copper wire as transmission "highways," bringing advanced video and telecommunications technology to every classroom.

► Carol Stumbo teaches journalism, oral history, speech, and drama to students in grades 9-12 at Wheelwright High School in Wheelwright, Kentucky. But through distance-learning telecommunications networks, she's able to link her rural kids to students in Israel, Japan, and Russia. She and her students annually produce a magazine, *Mantrip*, that focuses on the mountain heritage of their area.

► Sassiree Miles goes "on-camera" to teach advanced Spanish classes to students at her home school, Surrattsville High in Clinton, Maryland, and other high schools in Prince George's County, outside Washington, D.C. She's a leader in her district in using interactive television for learning.

► Bill Mulvey is a technology educator in Geneva, New York, who uses a variety of technology tools to prepare his students for the fast-paced, instant information society in which they live. His students use *USA Today's* information network, along with Apple computers and graphic arts packages, to produce their own newspaper.

► Jan Perry is a fourth grade teacher at Kimball Elementary School in Seattle, Washington. She uses technology to amass research that other teachers can use to enhance learning and restructure their workplaces. Her school is part of the Mastery in Learning program within NEA's National Center for Innovation.

NFIE Director Donna Rhodes describes the 1991 Christa McAuliffe Educators as "teachers on the cutting edge of the effort to restructure schools." Each will receive a $5,000 honorarium from NFIE.

They'll also have the opportunity to plan a 12-day summer conference for 20 other teachers, who will be named as Christa McAuliffe Fellows in April. The theme of that conference, to be held at Stanford University, will be "Preparing All Students for the 21st Century: Using Telecommunications To Restructure Schools."

NFIE conducts a national search to identify the five Christa McAuliffe Educators, but the 20 Christa McAuliffe Fellows are selected through a nationwide applications process.

Elizabeth Barrett

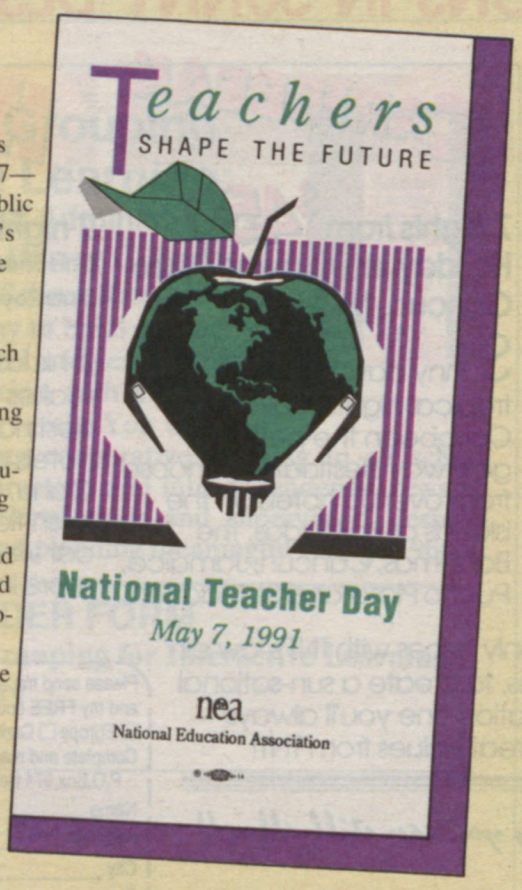
Carol Stumbo

Sassiree Miles

Bill Mulvey

Jan Perry

Get Ready For May 7 Celebration



National Teacher Day 1991 is scheduled for Tuesday, May 7—a day designed to provide public salutes to teachers. This year's theme is "Teachers Shape the Future."

To help local Associations celebrate, NEA is sending each one a booklet full of project ideas. These range from placing National Teacher Day ads in newspapers to sponsoring a student essay contest to honoring retirees. Suggested gifts for teachers and support staff: bud vases, t-shirts, candy bars, and potted plants, each with appropriate interpretive notes.

The kit also contains sample Teacher Day radio spots, a suggested news release to announce the National Teacher Day observance, camera-ready clip art, and a printed proclamation for public officials to sign.

National Teacher Day is celebrated in conjunction with Teacher Appreciation Week (May 5-11), sponsored by the National PTA.

Wanted: High School Achievers

Top high school achievers may compete for a spot on the fifth annual All-USA Academic First Team, sponsored by *USA Today*. In May, 20 students will be chosen for the team. Another 40 will win spots on the second and third teams.

All high school principals should have received nomination forms. Forms may also be obtained by calling 703/558-5613. Nominations must be signed by a teacher and a principal and are due March 8.

NEA Board Okays OEA Funding

At its December meeting, the NEA Board of Directors approved an appropriation of up to $85,000 from NEA's 1990-91 contingency fund to assist the Oklahoma Education Association in its effort to preserve H.B. 1017, a comprehensive education reform and new revenues bill.

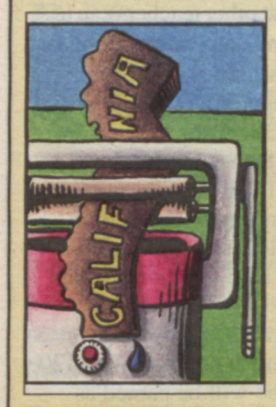
There were 147 votes in favor of the appropriation; none opposed; and three absentees. Six members of the board were replaced by alternates.

Steven B. Cook (Michigan), Juanita U. Cannon (Tennessee), and Harlan Bauermeister (Retired) were not present for the vote, but indicated their affirmative positions. The absentees were Robert H. Johan (Illinois), Shirley T. Knaack and Barbara J. Schram (Michigan), Ruthanne Phillips (Missouri), Philip Rumore (New York), Debbie Hogue Downing (Oklahoma), Josephine Slacer (Retired), and Mary Ann Smith and Patsy Watson (At Large).

The six alternates were Ray Price (Illinois), Mary Christian and Larry Chunovich (Michigan), Martha Karlovetz (Missouri), Lowena Bristol (New York), and Barbara Smith (Oklahoma).

TRENDS

Down and Out in The Statehouse



This year governors are singing the blues, and with good reason: some states face budget shortfalls in the billions. At least 28 states expect to cut budgets, raise taxes, or both.

Responses range from a plan to furlough 100,000 state workers in Virginia, which faces a $1 billion deficit, to education spending cuts and new taxes in California, where state officials are staring at a potential $7 billion shortage.

Maine's Republican governor, John McKernan, probably expressed the mood in statehouses nationwide: "There have been few times in the history of this state when the dual threats of war and a faltering economy have so dramatically and precipitously affected our lives."

No Safety Net To Call Their Own

The average white household in the United States owns 10 times as much wealth—the sum of everything from bank accounts to homes and cars—as Black households and eight times as much as Hispanic households.

The Census Bureau has just released results of a 1988 study showing that the median white household owns net assets worth $43,280. The Black household has net assets of $4,170, the Hispanic household, $5,520.

"This means minorities have much less of a private safety net to fall back on during hard times," says Georgetown University economist Isabel Sawhill.

A recent report by the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies reveals that already nearly half—46.5 percent—of the nation's Black children live in poverty.

Yet Another Reason

As if there weren't already enough reasons to keep class size down and pay teachers more, a recent study shows these factors actually help students go on to college.

High school seniors are 4.5 percent more likely to make it to college if their high school pays faculty 10 percent more.

And they're 3.8 percent more likely to get to college if class size in their high schools is 10 percent smaller.

Conducting the research was DePaul University economics professor William Sander. He surveyed 200,000 students at 158 Illinois high schools.

What Is Normal?

Is my child's behavior a problem? Where can I get help? Few child development books address these questions.

According to *What To Do Until the Grown-Up Arrives* by Dr. Joseph Novello, the most obvious symptoms for parents to watch out for are dramatic changes in behavior. A kid's sudden withdrawal or extreme irritability may signal trouble.

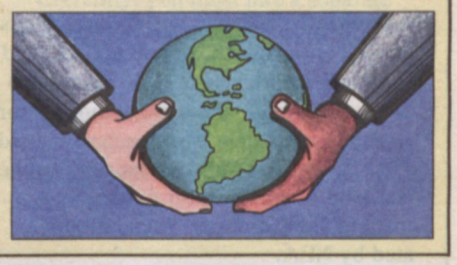
Parental attitudes toward treatment are key. When mental health professionals are associated with stigma, children may be denied help.

Now, the 'We' Generation?

Four years ago, college freshmen said they didn't give a hoot. Was promoting racial understanding very important? Just 27.2 percent said yes. What about cleaning up the environment? An all-time low of 15.9 percent agreed.

The entering class of 1990 say the whole world's their concern: on the same questions their scores are 38 percent and 33.9 percent. An all-time high of 43 percent say it's very important to influence social values. So it's no surprise: the proportion who are interested in teaching careers is rising—to 9 percent now from 8.2 percent in the fall of 1989.

The American Council on Education and the University of California at Los Angeles found these attitudes in their 25th annual study of college freshmen.



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YOU AND YOUR RETIREMENT

Tapping the Equity in Your Home

Your home probably accounts for a major portion of your net worth. But getting at this money isn't always easy.

Many retirees end up house-rich but cash-poor. Fortunately, there are several ways to use home equity to supplement income. The right method for you depends on factors like your age, marital status, health, and financial situation.

Home equity loans. These loans, also called "second mortgages," are the fastest and easiest way to access home equity. But they have three drawbacks:

► Since they're paid off by the month, you can't get one unless you can show a regular source of income.

► Many lending institutions charge not only interest, but closing fees.

► These loans are secured by your home—if you can't repay, you lose it.

Selling and moving. The simplest—and often most profitable—way to get money out of a home is to sell it and move someplace less expensive. People over age 55 can exclude up to $125,000 of capital gains from federal income taxes the first time they sell a home, subject to certain restrictions. But remember: you and your spouse together can use this tactic only once in a lifetime.

Selling and staying. You may need the money but not want to leave home. If so, one option is a "sale-leaseback": you sell your house to a relative or investor who then rents it back to you. You'll need an experienced real estate lawyer to set up the deal properly, and buyers may be scarce since the Tax Reform Act of 1986 abolished many real estate deductions.

Deferred payment loans. Public agencies in many states offer these loans for specific purposes like home improvements. Such loans usually have no origination fees and little or no interest, and you don't have to repay them as long as you live in your home. Some states also offer property tax deferral programs: you can, in effect, pay your taxes with equity. Contact your state department of aging, housing, or community development.

Reverse mortgages. Instead of borrowing a huge sum of money and paying it back gradually, as in a home loan, you borrow small amounts on a regular basis and pay them back when you sell your house. You can get regular payments for either as long as you live in your house ("tenure") or a specified length of time ("term"), or you can get a line of credit.

The size of the payments you get depends on the value of your house, your age, and the lender's costs (interest and fees). They're nontaxable and don't affect Social Security or Medicare benefits.

To secure the loan, the lender puts a lien on your property—the loan must be repaid before you can sell or transfer the house. Reverse mortgages are usually "nonrecourse" loans: your total obligation is limited to the value of your home, and the lender can't go after other assets or heirs.

But reverse mortgages are "rising-debt" loans: you pay interest on interest, so they cost more than home equity loans. Application fees, points, and other closing costs are usually higher, too. Reserve some of your equity when taking out the loan, or you could easily be left with nothing when you sell your house and pay off the loan and interest.

There are three major types of reverse mortgages:

Uninsured mortgages have a fixed life, usually between three and 10 years. They must be repaid on a certain date if the borrower hasn't died, sold the home, or moved. The payments are larger than those from the other two types, but you risk having to move before you're ready. Lenders avoid this type because they don't like evicting elderly people.

Privately insured mortgages provide payments as long as you live in your home. Your loan balance could exceed the value of your property, so some lenders demand a portion of the future appreciation of your home in addition to interest. Others charge an up-front guarantee fee, calculated as a percentage of your home's present value.

FHA-insured. The Department of Housing and Urban Development is funding an experimental program that will guarantee up to 25,000 reverse mortgages. Since the government is taking the risk, lenders can lower costs and offer more flexibility. Borrowers must undergo financial counseling before they can get their loan. So far, only a few lenders have been selected to participate in this program.

Like all financial transactions, any move to cash in your home equity involves some risk. You could use up your equity and have to move, or choose a fixed benefit that becomes inadequate later on. No matter what your choice, the more equity you turn into cash now, the less you and your heirs will have later.

For more on home equity conversions:

National Center for Home Equity Conversion
1210 E. College St., Suite 300
Marshal, MN 56258

"Options for Elderly Homeowners" ($3)
HUD User
P.O. Box 6091
Rockville, MD 20850

American Bar Association
Commission on Legal Problems of the Elderly
1800 M St., N.W.
Washington, DC 20036

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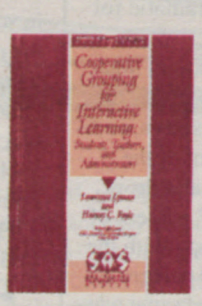

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RESEARCH CLUES

The Confidence Gap

The gender gap is alive and well and in your classroom, according to new research commissioned by the American Association of University Women.

The AAUW study, *Shortchanging Girls, Shortchanging America,* found that girls and boys may proceed through elementary school with equally high amounts of self-esteem, but girls' self-esteem drops dramatically as they get older.

By the time they reach high school, girls have a poor self-image, relatively low expectations in life, and much less confidence in themselves than boys.

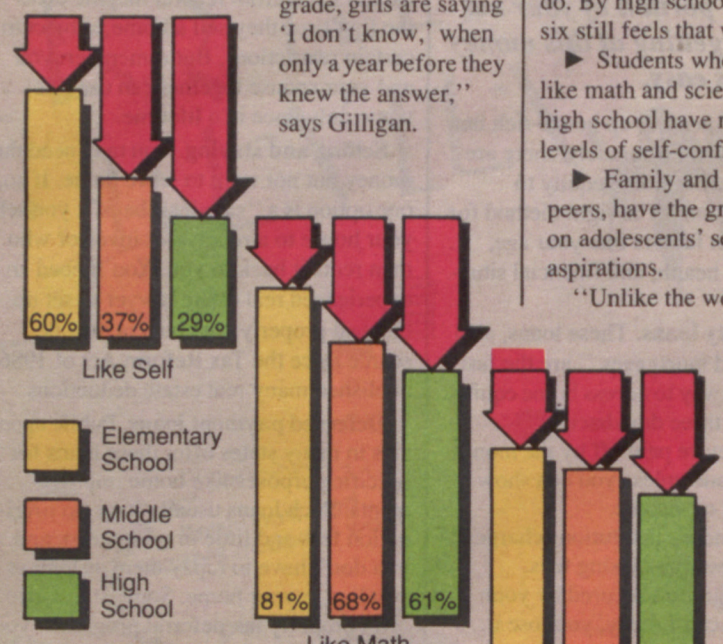
The study surveyed 3,000 children aged 9 to 15 in 12 locations across the country, using focus groups and children's responses to such statements as "I'm happy the way I am," and "I'm good at a lot of things."

The research found that, on average, all children lose self-esteem as they get older, but the loss is much more dramatic for girls than for boys.

By the time girls are in high school, only 29 percent say they are happy with themselves, compared with 46 percent of the boys. This is a dramatic drop from age 9, when 67 percent of girls say they're happy with the way they are and 60 percent of boys responded in the same way.

High school girls are much more likely than boys to say they're not "smart enough," or "good enough" for certain careers.

Girls' Declining Opinions of Themselves, Math, and Science



Source: AAUW report, Shortchanging Girls, Shortchanging America, 1991.

The research supports earlier findings by Harvard professor Carol Gilligan (Meet, September 1990) who has done her own groundbreaking research on the psychological development of women and girls.

"In the seventh grade, girls are saying 'I don't know,' when only a year before they knew the answer," says Gilligan.

NEA member Janet Golden, a science teacher in Rockdale, Georgia, goes even further.

"When students struggle in science, the boys blame the materials, the girls blame themselves. They've been conditioned to see things in black and white," says Golden, "while boys have learned all opinions are valid."

Here are some of the report's findings:

► African-American girls maintain high levels of self-esteem, possibly because they're often surrounded by strong female role models in their families. That feeling is not reinforced by school experiences, however, and these girls tend to feel alienated by school and teachers.

► Hispanic girls start and end with higher self-esteem than white girls but experience the sharpest drop of all: 38 percentage points.

► Students' interest in math and science starts out high in elementary school but drops as children get older. More girls than boys lose interest.

► Pride in schoolwork and abilities declines rapidly in adolescence. In elementary school, about half the students always feel "proud of the work" they do. By high school, only one in six still feels that way.

► Students who continue to like math and science through high school have much higher levels of self-confidence.

► Family and school, not peers, have the greatest impact on adolescents' self-esteem and aspirations.

"Unlike the world of Bart Simpson, this survey says parents and teachers still count," says AAUW President Sharon Schuster, who urges educators to help their female students.

"This sends a clear message to educators that we must be more sensitive to young girls' needs," adds Golden. "We play a vital role to encourage, not discourage them, and to nurture the aspirations they have."

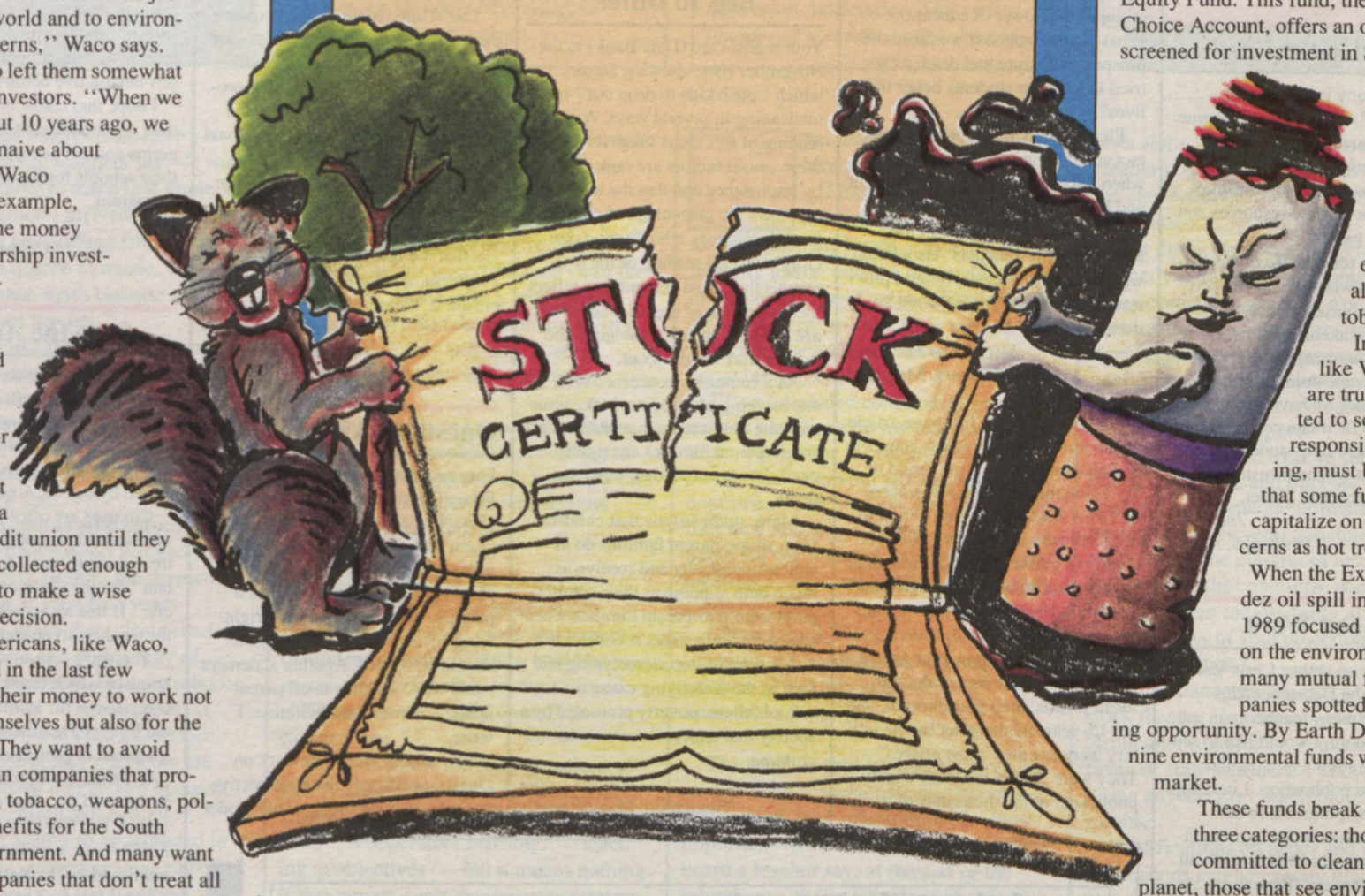
—Anita Merina

For the complete report, write Program and Policy Department, American Association of University Women, 1111 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036, 202-785-7700.

PERSONALLY SPEAKING

Becoming a Conscientious Investor

You don't have to compromise your principles to get a good return on your investment. Here's how to put your cash where your conscience is.



Like most of us, Alice Waco wants to earn a good return on her money. But even more important to her is that her money do good. Waco wants to invest only in companies that contribute to making the world a better place.

Waco and her husband, Bill McGee, began by doing some leisurely research on social investing. Then Waco's mother died, leaving her a $40,000 inheritance. That's made finding the right place to invest a pressing issue.

Waco, 59, a counselor at Ridgway High School in Santa Rosa, California, spent over 20 years as a nun and her husband about the same amount of time as a Catholic priest. The time they spent in the church contributed to their "commitment to social justice in this world and to environmental concerns," Waco says.

But it also left them somewhat at a loss as investors. "When we first came out 10 years ago, we were pretty naive about investing," Waco recalls. For example, they put some money into a partnership investment recommended by another teacher "and lost everything," says Waco. So, for now, they're keeping what they have in a teachers' credit union until they feel they've collected enough information to make a wise investment decision.

Many Americans, like Waco, have decided in the last few years to put their money to work not only for themselves but also for the social good. They want to avoid investments in companies that produce alcohol, tobacco, weapons, pollution, or benefits for the South African government. And many want to avoid companies that don't treat all groups equitably in the workplace.

Professional investors refer to these criteria as "screens." That is, the stocks are screened for the company's environmental performance, for example, or its treatment of minorities.

Finding a company that meets all these criteria is a tall order. Fortunately, there is help. For instance, Franklin Research and Development Co., a Boston investment company, analyzes companies' records of social responsibility and publishes its findings in monthly newsletters, *Franklin's Insight* and *Investing for a Better World*.

Several mutual funds claim to invest only in socially responsible companies. But the "screens" they use vary widely, particularly among the newer environmental funds. So does the return they give on investments. It's always important to get a prospectus and study the return before investing.

Here are some of the options:

► The Pax World Fund, set up in 1970, is the oldest of the socially responsible funds. Based in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, it is also one of the strictest.

Pax avoids companies that profit from alcohol, tobacco, or gambling as well as the top 100 U.S. Department of Defense contractors and the U.S. Treasury. It seeks out companies with sound pollution-control policies and a record of fair employment.

This fund is "the purest of the ethical funds," according to Don Phillips, editor of Mutual Fund Values, a mutual fund rating service in Chicago.

Not only is the Pax World Fund "clean," but it had a very good year in 1990, returning 10.53 percent when the market average, as measured by the Standard & Poor's Index of 500 stocks, was down 3.1 percent.

Of course, no mutual fund can guarantee future performance. One reason the Pax World Fund did so well last year, according to Phillips, was its insistence on investing in health care stocks, which had a very good year.

► Dreyfus Third Century, launched in 1972 by the Dreyfus Corp. in New York, takes quite a different approach, using a "looser screen," according to Phillips. This fund is concerned only that the companies it invests in treat their employees better than other companies in the same industry. It has held stocks in companies like Dow Chemical Co., manufacturer of Agent Orange.

► The Calvert Group in Bethesda, Maryland, manages five socially responsible funds. Calvert steers away from major defense contractors and companies that produce nuclear energy, make weapons, or invest in South Africa. Calvert Ariel Growth does not have an environmental screen, but the newer Ariel Appreciation does.

► The Parnassus Fund, in San Francisco, avoids companies involved in South Africa, weapons manufacture, nuclear power, alcohol, tobacco, or gambling. It seeks those with fair employment practices, good environmental records, and charitable activities.

► The Boston-based Pioneer Group bills itself as socially responsible. But its funds simply avoid companies involved in tobacco, alcohol, and gambling. They have invested in South Africa and in weapons makers. And they do not make any effort, according to Patrick McVeigh, vice president at Franklin Research and Development, to avoid companies with discriminatory employment practices. For those reasons, Franklin does not include these funds on its list of socially responsible funds.

► Teachers Insurance and Annuity Association has created a social alternative for its College Retirement Equity Fund. This fund, the Social Choice Account, offers an option screened for investment in South Africa, Northern Ireland, weapons, nuclear energy, alcohol, and tobacco.

Investors like Waco, who are truly committed to socially responsible investing, must be aware that some funds try to capitalize on social concerns as hot trends.

When the Exxon Valdez oil spill in Alaska in 1989 focused attention on the environment, many mutual fund companies spotted a marketing opportunity. By Earth Day 1990, nine environmental funds were on the market.

These funds break down into three categories: those that are committed to cleaning up the planet, those that see environmental cleanup as a good investment opportunity but don't really screen, and those that are baldly using the name "environmental" to attract investors even though they have no intention of using screens.

Four of the funds qualify as socially responsible, according to Franklin. Calvert Ariel Appreciation is one. The others are New Alternatives, Eco-Logical Trust, and the Progressive Environmental Fund.

A final point about socially responsible investing. Critics say socially responsible investors sacrifice returns on their money. Advocates disagree. "These funds can do exceptionally well," says Franklin's McVeigh. "Screening can help performance rather than hurt it."

For investors like Waco, though, the question of returns is immaterial. "I don't want any of my money to go to things I don't believe in," she says.

—Mary Rowland

Letters

Clean Up the Earth

Though in many instances the "greening of America" has become a profitable business ploy, it does have the potential to raise public consciousness about our consumption of our most finite resources and our wasteful habits.

It's nice to see *NEA Today* featuring educators who have developed innovative, environmentally sensitive projects and curriculums. I'd be interested in learning more about what students are doing in this area.

As educators we have a moral obligation to facilitate critical thinking skills and to help students make decisions that will help sustain life on an increasingly dirty planet.

John Lyle
Fairbanks, Alaska

Good Work

Your feature on author Chris Van Allsburg in the December *NEA Today* is one many teachers can use in the classroom. I would like to see "Meet the Author" as a regular series in your publication. Literature-based reading programs in our schools have succeeded in motivating elementary students to seek out leading authors and illustrators. Your interviews with outstanding children's writers would be up-to-date and would highlight information we could share with our students. To me, the quality of a newspaper lies in the timely articles that address our advanced and changing curriculum.

I am looking forward to your next issue—ready to clip, save, and savor!

Charon Stewart-Anderson
New Brighton, Minnesota

Helping Salvadorans

Thank you for printing the truth about El Salvador (International, December 1990). We Americans need to have our eyes opened as to where our tax dollars go and to see that the issues at stake are not always what the media present to us.

Several of my best friends are Salvadorans who have had to flee their homeland only because they attempted to right the wrongs of injustice and oppression, to help the poor, to educate and enlighten the people of their country. One of these friends is a teacher, who was captured and tortured for trying to help others learn the skills needed so that they might have the basic things we take for granted (like food and health care). It's painful to realize that the metal still left in his back from a grenade was paid for, in part, by my tax money.

The money we send to El Salvador is not helping fellow educators, whose dream, like ours, is to bring light and knowledge to students. Our tax dollars support a military that hurts and kills teachers, a military representing a government that is afraid of the power of education. What would happen if we faced the prospect of torture and death as we tried to help our students better their lives?

Please tell us whom we can contact and how we can be made aware when Salvadoran teachers are caught and held against their will. I would like to follow in the steps of the Massachusetts Teachers Association, whose members regularly send protests to help bring about the release of these teachers.

Melanie L. Jones
Gaithersburg, Maryland

Many thanks for the full-page article on the terrible human rights abuses in El Salvador. It makes me proud of my union that individual members and *NEA Today* are taking action to help Salvadorans by boycotting the country's coffee exports, demanding information on missing people, and educating about El Salvador's state-sponsored terrorism.

There is one error in your article, however. The murders of the six Jesuit priests, their housekeeper, and her 15-year-old daughter by the military were *not* the "most grisly." They were simply the most widely publicized of the thousands of grisly murders of innocent people who have spoken out or taken action for social change, while the U.S. has continued to pour money, arms, training, and "advisers" into the Salvadoran military machine.

Mele Stokesberry
Kihei, Hawaii

Ed Note: For more information about education in El Salvador, contact the Network of Educators' Committees on Central America, 1118 22nd St., N.W., Washington, DC 20037.

Beg To Differ

Your report card (Data Bank) in the November issue showing factors which "push kids to drop out" is misleading in several ways. A quick reading of this chart suggests that these causal factors are rank ordered by importance and that the numbers represent the percentage of children in each category who do drop out. Only a careful reading of the text reveals that these percentages reflect the proportion of eighth graders who are in each "at risk" category and may or may not drop out.

As a counselor concerned with stereotyping of students, I take issue with the implication that children in single-parent families are significantly more at risk than other students.

Many studies show that children from single-parent families do as well academically and receive as much help at home as their counterparts from two-parent families when socioeconomic status is considered.

It's time to stop stereotyping and look at the underlying cause of school failure: poverty promoted by a society that undervalues women and children.

William Cottle
Stoughton, Massachusetts

This Is Recognition?

Last fall in Washington, D.C., I and 107 others received the Presidential Award for Excellence in Science and Mathematics Teaching.

During our week-long stay, we were ignored by the President and his Administration and consequently by the press. This Presidential snub hurt the program, its administrators, the awardees, and science and mathematics education. I expected the press not to promote anything positive about education, but I didn't expect that attitude from the present Administration.

The White House did send over a picture of the First Family dog—we got the message. To further confirm his attitude toward the teaching profession, the President did give that famous educator Bo Derek a personal White House tour a few days after our departure. This is the education President? You must be kidding!

I have joined the growing consensus that it's one term and out for this President, and I will do what I can to ensure it. Please help.

Gregory Bush
Guaynabo, P.R.

Questions About 'Quest'

I am addressing the "Fighting the Fringe" article in the November 1990 *NEA Today*. It dealt with the Quest anti-drug programs used in many of the public schools. I am a parent and a teacher who takes a position that makes me the "right-wing" fringe this article suggests should be battled. Another statement made was "be open to all parent ideas," so with that invitation, I write.

I have done my homework on Quest, specifically the nondirective decision-making model. This model teaches no absolutes, but allows children to discuss options within their peer group with the teacher acting as facilitator.

Children are then believed capable of arriving at a sound decision or choice. This model assumes that children are formal (adult) operators who take into account future outcomes.

In fact, children are concrete operators and the future to them is the snack or TV show after school. The basis for this nondirective decision-making model is not even educationally sound.

I wonder if Quest International would make available statistics to confirm their success rate in altering student behavior toward the positive (noninvolvement in drugs and other self-destructive behavior).

I hope that teachers will do their own research regarding Quest programs and not accept their use in their schools for the sake of having a "program."

Claudia Parker
Coldwater, Michigan

Save the Animals

An offer for "Circus: A Teaching Unit" by Ringling Bros. and Barnum and Bailey Circus appeared in your November issue. It disturbs me that animal exploitation is being promoted by our NEA newspaper.

Circuses are often places where wild animals are neglected and mistreated while being forced to "entertain" for the profit of their "owners." Is this an acceptable industry for teachers to promote?

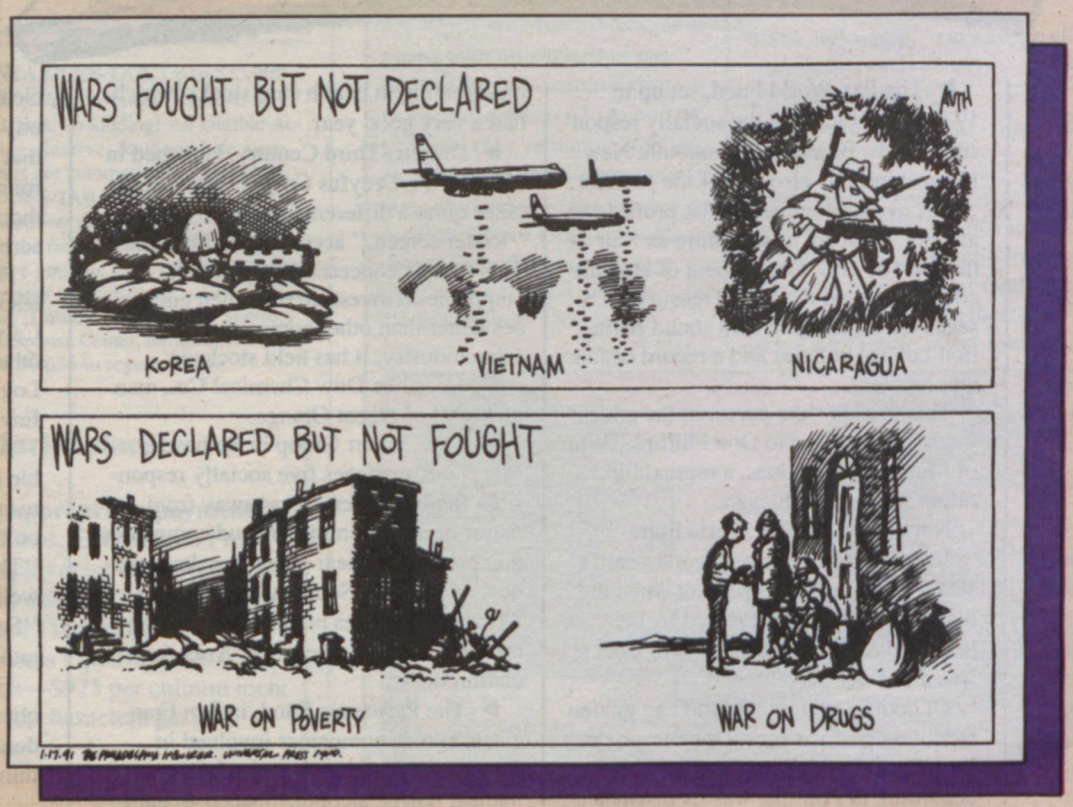
There are several sources that I know of which teach respect and compassion for animals. People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, a nonprofit organization, publishes *PETA Kids*, a children's magazine. Write to PETA, Box 42516, Washington, DC 20015. Also, there is *KIND News*, a children's newspaper published by the National Association for Humane and Environmental Education (also a nonprofit group), 67 Salem Rd., East Haddam, CT 06423.

Polly Frenaye-Hutcheson
Cloverdale, California

Sports: Off Base?

I would like to comment on the "The High Price of Honesty" in the October issue of *NEA Today*. Three cheers for Sue Collins. One can only imagine the grief she went through. In our profession everyone should have the conviction of Sue Collins. But, unfortunately, the priorities of our society, with regards to sports, have gone askew.

Louis Janette
Bangor, Pennsylvania



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Debate

Should Teachers Hire Teachers?

YES

Dorothy Ballard is a reading specialist at Shaw Visual and Performing Arts Center in St. Louis, Missouri, and immediate past president of St. Louis NEA. She also serves on the Missouri NEA Board of Directors and is director of the St. Louis NEA Adopt-a-Student-at-Risk program.

NO

Sharon Harper teaches gifted students at Brooke High School in Wellsburg, West Virginia. She's a former member of the West Virginia Education Association Executive Committee, and a former president of the Brooke County Education Association. She's also founder of a summer stock theater.

How many times have you heard teachers say, "I was hired to teach first grade, but when I arrived at my school I was told I'd be teaching fifth grade." Or, "I have a degree in music, but I was assigned to teach math because that's what the school needed."

Comments like these can be heard all across the country because teachers as a group aren't in control of their careers. The complaints will continue until teachers truly become professionals by serving on committees and boards that select teaching staff.

The administrators who currently hire teachers either have never worked in a school or haven't been in the real world of teaching for at least five years.

The concept of teachers hiring teachers reflects the trend and philosophy of site-based management. In many schools, a shift to that kind of management is considered a move toward excellence.

All across the country, schools are beginning to insist that school decision making be decentralized. School employees are asking to be included in decisions about curriculum and staff. Teachers should be at the forefront to ensure that quality teachers are hired.

Strengthening teachers' roles and replacing bureaucratic mandates in hiring would make for better education. Better hiring practices would help make certain that the teachers selected could make positive educational decisions—for instance, on behalf of today's diverse student population.

Schools aren't tiny islands separated from their communities. And—today particularly—many schools and communities are culturally and linguistically diverse. That situation presents a special challenge to newly hired teachers. They should be chosen with the thought that they will need to play active roles in community organizations and become resource persons.

When it comes to matching newly hired teachers with schools, grade levels, and subject areas, teachers in the hiring role would be able to insist that rigorous preparation and certification standards be enforced.

The trend is to issue temporary teaching certificates and push more technical specialists (who've taken alternate routes to certification) into the classroom. Along with a lessening emphasis on child development theory and practice, this will have a very negative influence on the teaching profession.

"Real" teachers know that students think and solve problems according to their stage of development. Knowing this helps teachers better understand and respond to each student.

"Real" teachers can detect can- didates who fail to recognize appropriate developmental clues and patterns of student growth. Nothing could be worse than technicians trying to force children to meet totally unrealistic expectations.

Teachers know the right questions to ask. A candidate may use educational terms—"learning styles," "time on task," "cooperative learning," "teaching to objectives"—but it means nothing if that person can't demonstrate mastery and comprehension of those terms as they relate to appropriate student activities.

When teachers ask candidates about lesson plans and student activities, they know from experience whether the responses will work. Teachers are also more likely to ask for proof of proficiency in areas like art and creative writing.

Most administrators who interview candidates ask about discipline. But it's practicing teachers who will pay rapt attention to the answers as they look for specific preventive approaches that will establish positive relationships with students and their parents. The answers should be compatible with the school and community environment.

Teachers should control the quality of the profession by actively hiring teachers who'll not only transmit basic skills to students but stimulate them to think critically and creatively. Only by being a part of the process can they be true mentors to teachers of the future!

What teacher has the time to hire teachers?

I have yet to hear any teacher say, "I have so much extra time on my hands. I'm weeks ahead with my lesson plans. I'm caught up on my paper grading. I've sent little notes to all my students to raise their self-esteem. I've called several parents to discuss home reinforcement.

"I've scheduled community volunteers to participate in my classroom three times a week for the remainder of the month. I've prepared worksheets for the next two review lessons. I've worked up four new learning stations. I've prepared for my textbook review committee meeting. I've completed the paper for my graduate class.

"Now I think I'll pop over to the office to peruse the applications of prospective teachers. Then this afternoon I'll interview a few."

The truth is that no teacher ever has enough time for adequate classroom preparation, peer interaction, or—most important—instruction. Have you ever heard a teacher say, at the end of the school year, that every planned objective had been taught to every single child?

A teacher's time is precious and should be allocated to teaching responsibilities, not still another administrative chore.

Teachers already serve in varying degrees as social workers, psychologists, vocational counselors, parents, cashiers, mediators, gurus, disciplinarians, public relations advisers, financial counselors, time management experts, cafeteria and playground supervisors, restroom monitors, chauffeurs, and tour guides—in addition to being first and foremost teachers.

Must we also assume the role of personnel director?

Teaching is a full-time job. Personnel management is also a full-time job. A full-time teacher taking on the extra responsibilities required by the hiring process would have to relegate some teaching duties to the back seat.

Keeping abreast of hiring practices, certification requirements, and seniority laws alone would require time that a teacher could use to better advantage in the classroom or in classroom preparation.

Our district has seen no evidence of a teacher shortage. On the contrary, often many candidates apply for a position. The time required to adequately interview those applicants, let alone review their qualifications and perhaps recall some, would be more than time-consuming. It would be time-*usurping*.

And picture this: You've served on a hiring committee and opposed the candidacy of someone ultimately hired by the district. Several transfers later, this teacher is in the classroom next to yours and, because the committee wasn't sworn to silence—an impossibility at any level—knows of your objection. Isn't this a pretty situation?

As the managing director of a summer stock theatre, I'm responsible for the hiring and, regrettably, sometimes the firing of staff members. I know that hiring anyone isn't much more than a gamble.

Qualifications on paper and interview impressions can be exactly that and nothing more. Even recommendations and character references are sometimes of little value. In the end, performance on the job is what counts, and that can't be measured until after the fact.

Do teachers really need to serve on another committee formulating policies? Would a hiring committee make more effective decisions than the present personnel officers? I say no.

We must remember that the vast majority of school administrators are former classroom teachers who have gone on to study hiring policies and practices. Teachers hiring teachers could in the end severely limit the potential of a faculty.

There's nothing wrong with the hiring system; it's the firing system we should be focusing on. Unprepared, unenthusiastic, uninvolved teachers need to be let go so qualified ones can be hired by qualified personnel officers.

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